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Edited by NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

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WORDS WORDS WORDS

The Press and Literacy

LIKE the baa-ing of sheep, the cry for more newsprint begins to have a familiar echo: in fact, without undue cynicism, one might say that during the post-war years it has been a regular feature of the Press. For with each fresh export drive in newsprint has come the threat of further paper 'cuts' on the home market. About the whole affair there has been a certain see-saw monotony; and the same is true of the editorial treatment which been meted out to the subject. The assumptions have been twofold: that Britain's economy is dependent upon a large export trade and that in the British public's interest the number of pages in the daily papers must be increased. In Fleet Street, if not in Parliament, the two have been taken as axiomatic. To say the least this is misleading, and it is the purpose of the present leader whilst, accepting the first assumption, to call in question the second: to ask whether, remembering recent temporary increases in newsprint, the extra pages have been merited; whether, when such pages have been added, they have been used in the public's interest. Take, for instance, the evening Press.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a Londoner had nine evening papers from which to choose: to-day he has three. Yet none of these can compare favourably with any of the papers running at the turn of the century—*The Echo, The Globe, The St. James's Gazette, The Westminster Gazette* or *The Pall Mall Gazette.* Again one has to admit that the deaths of these papers were not brought about either by any falling-off in material or lack of informed comment: rather, the opposite. They were killed in the interests of 'big business', and for reasons which were outside of journalism. They did not measure success in the terms of circulation-achievements and their editors were men of integrity who were prepared to sacrifice their posts for their principles. In particular, with reference to *The Pall Mall Gazette,* one remembers Frederick Greenwood whose life has recently been written by Mr. J. W. Robertson Scott. Nowadays this kind of sacrifice is rare, because the modern editor has become little more than a manager. He is a manager who is subject to his proprietor—body and soul. However, it may be objected here, that this is to overstate the case: it may even be argued that for the modern editor to all intents and purposes it merely amounts to acting under a form of benevolent despotism. During the past few decades doubtless that is, and has been, the experience of some editors: they played with fire and they were lucky. Alas others, as time taught them, were less fortunate: they resigned and thus salved their consciences. Yet others stayed and still stay: these are the contemptibles—and just how contemptible they are can be seen when one recalls such a mud campaign as

that launched earlier this year by the *Evening Standard* against Mr. John Strachey. Moreover, one does not write with political advocacy in mind, because the same danger would apply were the majority of the papers overnight to change their bondage from the Conservative to the Labour or Liberal Parties. The danger is ever-present. For a dictatorship over the Press is as dangerous as a dictatorship by the Press. At the moment one is only faced with a dictatorship over the Press (there being no Labour Party evening paper the charges of the *Evening Standard* remained unanswered—despite the fact that one of the other two evening papers is Liberal in name). Further, at this stage, the conception of a dictatorship by the Press may seem a fantastic notion: certainly that is what the reigning Press Lords would have one believe. Yet the eventuality is one which should not be ignored; nay, it should be asked if such an eventuality is not preciously near. For this reason a short comparison between the national and provincial press can be instructive.

The national dailies aim at national circulations. Consequently a spirit of rivalry is abroad amongst them and, in competing for the 'largest circulations', they attempt to defeat each other by means of sensationalism. For them sensationalism is the key to success since it leads to 'big business'. With the provincial papers it is otherwise: they have a steady corpus of local support upon which they can fall back. Accordingly they can afford to be more discriminating: they have no need to rely upon such devices as 'comic strips' or pseudo-scientific articles (when world crises appear non-existent, or cannot be manufactured, these pseudo-scientific articles are constantly called in to fill the gap: they provide a similar sort of stimuli). The headlines of the provincial papers are also noticeably more sober, less alarmist. For it is worth noting that, *The Times* apart, it is papers such as the *Manchester Guardian* or *Birmingham Post* which are most widely quoted by the International Press Agencies. This is so because their editorial comment is independent and free of the grip of commercialism. Leaders can be devoted to regional subjects in which party considerations are of no concern—for instance planning new by-passes or borough buildings; and this in turn effects the editorial policy at a higher level. It means that leaders on aspects of international affairs can be written in a language which is living as opposed to a language in which everything is expressed in what may be described as twentieth century journalistic formulae; a language so unimaginative that the second part of each sentence can be guessed from the first. Amongst the leader writers of the national daily papers there is one marked similarity—a nondescript style. Day after day the same sentiments are trotted out, and in the evening they are repeated: a dreary uniformity binds the lot. After a holiday on the Continent where the papers are so much more alive and kicking—kicking is the right word(!)—one returns to England to find the same Fleet Street cartel in charge: comments made by Press Lords at fashionable luncheons are reported in one column and then served in slightly different phraseology in the

editorial columns. One is tempted to sigh: 'Here they come—Lord Beaverbrook, Frank Owen, Hannen Swaffer, Lord Northcliffe and A. J. Cummings—the apotheosis of the worn out political cliché.' One begins to realize as Karl Otten once said that universal compulsory education of the type introduced at the end of the last century has not fulfilled expectations by producing happier and more effective citizens: instead it has merely created 'readers of the yellow press and cinema goers'. So it is that in an examination of the contemporary Press one is forced back to what may be called the problem—or bugbear—of literacy. The two are not disconnected.

During the evening rush hour one may observe numerous clerks and others preparing to jump off buses: with infinite care they mouse their way to the edge of the running-board and then, just before the bus stops, they jump. One may perhaps be permitted to attach a certain symbolic significance to this act.

In the modern city for the thousands who have to clock-in and clock-out their existence, this act is one of the few ways in which they may assert their manhood. It is a symbol of their lost virility, and it is to this pass which the creed of universal literacy has brought them. As a result of Press campaigns promoted indirectly in the interests of 'larger circulations', but really in the interests of 'big business', an over-emphasis has fallen upon being 'lettered'. Automatically clerical work is put at a higher level than manual work; the insurance agent is rated higher than the farmer. To be 'unlettered' is to be thought 'uncultured'. The phrase, 'I read it in the papers', has become a twentieth century gospel saying, with the result that 'literacy' has come to be equated with 'culture'. The oral tradition of learning has nearly vanished and a division has occurred between wisdom and book-learning. This is not to deny that wisdom cannot be found in books, but to suggest that too exclusive a concentration upon them can lead to a false ascetism. Indeed, in employing such a word as 'ascetism' in this context one has an indication of how, as it were, the alphabet has come between the reality and interpretation of words; for the original meaning of ascetism was 'hard work'. Yet to-day though a man may be able to read a page (*i.e.* be able to produce orally the sounds which different formations of alphabetical letters signify) it is no guarantee that he has grasped what has been said. For language has in the popular Press become so orientated towards the external aspects of behaviour that any formal precision which derives from an awareness of the past usage of words has been lost: words have become one-dimensional. The current arguments being advanced for Basic English are probably symptomatic, for, were it be widely adopted, only external relationships could be recorded. Which is precisely the level of popular journalism.

For the Press, politics exist only at one level: the level of news value. They are reported in much the same spirit as a cricket or boxing matches are reported. The race for armaments is described in terms similar to a race for runs, or victories of diplomacy at the conference

table in terms similar to a fight won on points. This popular and one-dimensional approach leads eventually to a form of flat thinking: it lacks depth, and it is this lack of depth, of failure to go to the roots of a problem—so much a mark of this century's thinkers,—that is examined by Professor Butterfield in his essay on 'The Tragic Element in Modern International Conflict'. As he points out there, the note of tragedy springs largely from an inability to take into account man's universal sin. Or, as T. E. Hulme stated it some twenty-six years ago in his book, *Speculations*:

> All thought since the Renaissance, in spite of its apparent variety, forms one coherent whole. It all rests on the same conception of the nature of man and all exhibits the same inability to recognize the meaning of the dogma of original sin. In this period not only have its philosophy, its literature and its ethics been based upon this new conception of man as fundamentally good, as sufficient, as the measure of all things; but a good case can be made out for regarding many of its characteristic economic features as springing entirely from this central abstract conception.

This may sound obvious, but it is not so obvious in an age when such great faith has been placed in the nature of man, and that faith tried and been found wanting. As Professor Butterfield has already said in his book, *Christianity and History* (1949): 'Such faith is a recent heresy and a very disastrous one'.

This is the point at which to hark back to the subject of the national Press, for it is in the national Press where the obvious is shunned and the trite exalted that one finds a distinction between the insurance agent and farmer being hinted at. The insurance agent (the insurance agencies advertise regularly in the national Press) is placed in a class above the farmer. Writing and reading are exalted above agriculture and handicraft; for writing and reading are considered a part of civilization—one might even say, so such reasoning runs, as the beginning of civilization. The farmer is considered something of a social outcast, a primitive man. Yet it should be pointed out that in temperament and in capacity for logical and symbolical thought there is no difference between a man of the early Roman Empire, a man of the Hapsburg Austrian Empire, or a man of the modern British Empire. Certain ideas and concepts for men are as ultimate as their physical constitution. For as Paul Radin, the anthopologist, has declared: 'the distinction of peoples in a state of nature from civilized peoples can no longer be maintained'. Indeed by making literacy the universal yardstick by which men must be measured, the national Press has done more than anything else to kill such local industries as weaving and basket-making. Manual work is considered *infra dig;* and to which any type of clerical work, however subhuman the conditions under which it is executed, is considered preferable. Unfortunately this newspaper gospel has been proclaimed widely, although the provincial Press because of its regional ties has to some extent been able to counteract this belittlement of the vocational call in life; to stand guard over the real, as opposed to the alphabetical, meanings of words

like 'culture' and 'wisdom'. For 'culture' is a word which up to the nineteenth century was always analagous to *agriculture* and 'wisdom' a word which originally meant skill.

At one time both these words—to take but two examples—signified productive and constructive arts. To some extent, they still do, but they have been so popularly misused in recent years that to be used in their original sense they have either to be qualified considerably or italicized. For with the spread of compulsory learning, and the consequent enthronement of literacy above all other wisdoms ('skills'), the meaning of such words has grown horizontally rather than vertically: that is to say these words have become mere ciphers, mere shadows of the symbols for which they once stood ('In the beginning was the Word. . . '). Yet, although one cannot make hard and fast distinctions between oral and written literatures, this one can say: that an impoverishment of the oral tradition leads to an inevitable impoverishment in the written word. Indeed, this may be one reason why to-day's public for poetry is so small: it has not been taught to read aloud, whilst, as a result of this lack of vocal testing, poets in their turn have given more and more of their attention to typographical as opposed to fresh oral experiments. For the divorce between oral and written literature has led to a sharpening of the division between myth and fact, between poetry and prose; because taken in the round oral literature is poetical, mythical and spiritual whereas the written word veers towards the prosaic, literal and secular. The subject is not one to be spoken of in terms of generalizations so much as in terms of tendencies; and the present tendency of giving an exaggerated importance to the printed word over the spoken word has led to a widespread deterioration of the faculty memory. 'Cannot a man remember?' cried Plato, and continued:

> The invention [of letters] will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use them, because they will not exercise their memory. Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without teaching, and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise but only wiseacres.

To this truth, two thousand years now testify, for one sees all over the Western World how when a nation has learnt to read, the folk-lore which was formerly a possession of the whole community becomes gradually the heritage of what the 'lettered' describe as the 'illiterate elements' of the population; and as these 'illiterate elements' become absorbed into the state mechanism of compulsory education, so the remaining folk-lore is slowly crushed out of existence: in the end it becomes a relic fit solely for museum inspection. In this respect, 'community singing' cannot be made a substitute for folk song: its level of depth of expression is as restricted as that of Basic English,

since it has been one of the disastrous fallacies of the national papers that in trying to foster a 'community spirit' by means of 'community singing' and the like, they have invoked a 'spirit' which they have never defined for a 'community' whose only real tie so far as the Press is concerned is the one-dimensional level of literacy. Yet the bleating and baa-ing in Fleet Street continues. A recent Unesco report declares that British public is the best informed, engorging eighteen pounds of newsprint per head per year. The reckoning is statistical, for, as the report goes on, in the United States three hundred and fifty seven people out of each thousand gourmandize seventy pounds per head per year. The public pride and national honour called forth by such figures should not be allowed to pass by unnoticed. It is a sign that in the transition from a dictatorship over the Press to a dictatorship by the Press, everything is ready for the first move. In the cause of patriotism, it is the result of allowing national honour to be put before national honesty. Temporarily, it is a case that words, words, words have won the day; but it is a temporary victory. It can be countered as soon as it is remembered once more that the readiness is all, that in the beginning was the Word.

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Owing to technical difficulties it has been impossible to publish a Summer number this year. This number therefore is Volume VII, Number I. The Winter 1950-51 number will be a double-number to mark this review's first decade of publication.

THE TRAGIC ELEMENT IN MODERN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

HERBERT BUTTERFIELD

IN the nineteenth century, when many people were optimistic in their views of human nature, and confident that the course of progress was going to be continued into an indefinite future, there were one or two prophets who feared and foretold that the twentieth century would see great wars of peoples, popular military dictatorships and the harnessing of the machines of industry to the science of warfare. It is interesting to note that, without knowing whether one country or another was going to emerge as the chief offender, and without basing his prediction upon any view that Germany was likely to present a special problem to the European continent, a writer could still feel assured, a generation beforehand, that this age of terrible warfare was coming. He could see, in other words, that, apart from the emergence of a special criminal, the developments in the situation itself were driving mankind into an era of conflict. In the midst of battle, while we are all of us in fighting mood, we see only the sins of the enemy and fail to reflect on those predicaments and dilemmas which so often develop and which underlie the great conflicts between masses of human beings. And though these conflicts could hardly have taken place if all men were perfect saints, we often forget that many of the inhuman struggles that have divided the human race would hardly have occurred if the situation had been one of completely righteous men confronted by undiluted and unmitigated crime. Given the ordinary amount of cupidity and wilfulness in human beings, unmanageable situations are likely to develop and some of them may almost be guaranteed to end in terrible conflict. While there is battle and hatred men have eyes for nothing save the fact that the enemy is the cause of all the troubles; but long, long afterwards, when all passion has been spent, the historian often sees that it was a conflict between one half-right that was perhaps too wilful, and another half-right that was perhaps too proud; and behind even this he discerns that it was a terrible predicament, which had the effect of putting men so at cross-purposes with one another. This predicament is the thing which it is the purpose of this paper to examine; and first of all I propose to try to show how the historian comes to discover its existence.

If we consider the history of the historical writing that has been issued, generation after generation, on a given body of events, we shall generally find that in the early stages of this process of reconstruction the narrative which is produced has a primitive and simple shape. As one generation of students succeeds another, however, each

developing the historiography of this particular subject, the narrative passes through certain typical stages until it is brought to a high and subtle form of organization. It would be difficult to give names to these successive stages in the development of the historiography of a given theme, but there is an early period in the writing-up of a subject, particularly when the subject itself is one form or another of human conflict, which seems to me to belong to the class of literature sometimes described as 'Heroic'. It does not matter whether the topic which the historian is writing about is the victory of Christianity in the Roman Empire, or the struggles of the modern scientists in the seventeenth century, or the case of either the French or the Russian Revolutions. There is a recognizable phase in the historical reconstruction or the chronicle writing which has distinctive features and shows a certain characteristic form of organization; and on more than one occasion in my life I have found myself saying that this kind of historiography bears the marks of the Heroic age. It represents the early period when the victors write their own chronicles, gloat over the defeated, count their trophies, commemorate their achievements, and show how righteousness has triumphed. And it may be true that the narrative has a primitive sort of structure that we can recognize, but it is a structure that requires little thought on the part of the writers of the history; for it was ready-made for them all the time—it is nothing more than the sort of organization that a narrative acquires from the mere fact that the author is taking sides in the conflict. We who come long afterwards generally find that this kind of history has over-dramatized the struggle in its aspect as a battle of right versus wrong; and to us it seems that these writers refused to exercise imaginative sympathy over the defeated enemy, so that they lack the perspective which might have been achieved if they had allowed themselves to be driven to a deeper analysis of the whole affair. In England our own whig interpretation of history is only a development from the 'Heroic' way of formulating the issues of human conflict—as though the parliamentarians of the seventeenth century were provoked to war by mere personal wickednesses and deliberate aggressions on the part of Charles I and his supporters.

Though I have no doubt that the progress of historiography to a higher level than this is really to be regarded as a collaborative achievement, I have always understood that the name of S. R. Gardiner is particularly associated with the developments which led to a drastic re-focussing of these English constitutional conflicts of the seventeenth century. It seems to have been the case furthermore that with him as with other people the re-focussing resulted from what in the last resort might be described as the method of taking compassion on the defeated. Gardiner's mode of procedure led him to be careful with the defeated party, and he tried by internal sympathetic infiltration really to find out what was in their minds. And this is a process to which there ought to be no limits, for historical imagination comes to its sublimest achievements when it can succeed in comprehending the

people not like-minded with oneself. Once such a process is embarked upon, the truth soon emerges that it is an easy thing to produce a whig history of a constitutional conflict or alternatively a royalist version of the affair; but it is no easy matter to comprise the two in a single survey, since clearly they cannot be just joined or added to one another. In reality you find that at every inch in your attempt to collate the outlooks of the two belligerent parties you are driven to a higher altitude—you have to find a kind of historical truth that lies on a higher plane before you can make the evidence square with itself or secure a story that comprehends all the factors and embraces the purely partial visions of the two opposing sides. Then, after much labour, you may achieve something more like a stereoscopic vision of the whole drama. Similarly, if an English foreign secretary and an Austrian ambassador give curiously divergent reports of a conversation that they have had with one another, the historian would not be content merely to add the two reports together. Collating them inch by inch he would use one document to enable him to see new folds of implication in the other. So he would be carried to a higher version of the whole affair—one which embraces the contradictions in the original accounts and even enables us to understand how the discrepancies should have occurred. In the long run the historian will not limit himself to seeing things with the eyes of the royalist or with the eyes of the roundhead; but, taking a loftier perspective which puts him in a position to embrace both, he will reach new truths to which both sides were blind—truths which will even enable him to see how they came to differ so much from one another.

When the historiography of the English seventeenth-century constitutional struggles has developed through the work of Gardiner and his successors, and has been brought to a higher state of organization by virtue of processes somewhat on the pattern that I have described, what emerges is a new and drastically different formulation of the whole conflict. And this new way of presenting the entire issue has a peculiar characteristic which I wish to examine, because it shows us what the revised perspective really amounts to—it provides us with almost a definition of what is implied in the progress of historiography as it moves further away from the events that are being narrated, further away from the state of being contemporary history. The progress of historiography takes us away from that first simple picture of good men fighting bad; and not merely in the case of seventeenth century England but in one field of history after another we find that it contributes a new and most uncomfortable revelation—it gradually disengages the structural features of a conflict which was inherent in the dialectic of events. It shows us situations hardening, events tying themselves into knots, human beings faced by terrible dilemmas, and one party and another being driven into a corner. In other words, as the historiography of a given episode develops and comes to be further removed from the passions of those who were active in the drama, it uncovers at the basis of the story a funda-

mental human predicament—one which we can see would have led to a serious conflict of wills even if all men had been fairly intelligent and reasonably well-intentioned. Perhaps it was this reformulation of the conflict which Lord Acton had in mind when he suggested that it needs the historian to come on the scene at a later time to say what it was that these poor seventeenth-century royalists and roundheads were really fighting about.

In the new organization of the narrative the personal goodness or badness of Charles I may still appear to be operative but it ceases to be the central issue, ceases to be the basis for the mounting of the whole story. We see the English monarchy coming into a serious predicament in this period in any case; and something of a parallel kind is seen to take place as we study the conflicts of the reign of George III. The central fact—the one that gives the new structure to the whole narrative—is a certain predicament, a certain situation that contains the elements of conflict irrespective of any special wickedness in any of the parties concerned; and the personal goodness or badness of Charles I or George III operates only, so to speak, on the margin of this, and becomes rather a fringing issue. So, while contemporary ways of formulating the human conflict have the structure of melodrama, the white hero fighting the black villain of the piece in a straight war of right versus wrong, historiography in the course of time leads us to transpose the lines of the picture and redraft the whole issue, especially as we come to comprehend more deeply the men who were not like-minded with ourselves. The higher historiography moves away from melodrama and brings out the tragic element in human conflict.

If all this is true, then we who are so deeply engaged in an age of conflict, are under an obligation not to be too blindly secure, too wilfully confident, in the contemporary ways of formulating that conflict; and it is incumbent upon us not quite to forget how future historiography may expose the limitations of our vision. If all this is true, then an issue is drawn between the view which the contemporary historian so often tends to possess and the view associated with a higher and riper stage of historiography—the view of what I hope I may be allowed to call 'academic history'. The issue is drawn because the two kinds of history differ in the actual structure of the narrative and formulation of the theme, unless the contemporary history has been written after great prayer and fasting, which seldom happens to be the case. If what I have said is true, then the examination of the actual structure of a piece of historical narrative can be at any rate one of the tests of the intellectual quality of the work and the genuineness of its historical perspective. Furthermore, if any people should desire to envisage the events of their own day with a certain historical-mindedness, then we have at least a clue to the kind of direction in which they should move in their attempt to achieve the object. For if we realize the way in which historical science develops in the course of time—if we know even only one

of the laws which govern its development as it proceeds further away from the merely contemporary point of view—then we have at any rate a hint of the kind of thing which historical perspective requires of us; and we can be to that degree more hopeful in our attempt to hasten or anticipate the future verdict of historical science. Behind the great conflicts of mankind is a terrible human predicament which lies at the heart of the story; and sooner or later the historian will base the very structure of his narrative upon it. Contemporaries fail to see the predicament or refuse to recognize its genuineness, so that our knowledge of it comes from later analysis—it is only with the progress of historical science on a particular subject that men come really to recognize that there was a terrible knot almost beyond the ingenuity of man to untie. It represents therefore a contribution that historical science itself has added to our interpretation of life—one which leads us to place a different construction on the whole human drama, since it uncovers the tragic element in human conflict. In historical perspective we learn to be a little more sorry for both parties than they knew how to be for one another.

The international situation of the present day is so difficult, and we are so greatly in need of a deeper vision that we ought to be ready to clutch at anything which might have a chance of leading us to fresh thoughts or new truths. We might ask, therefore, whether in the modern world there is any hint of the kind of human predicament that we have been considering and whether the idea can be of any use to us when we are seeking light on our contemporary problem. For the purpose of illustrating an argument I should like to describe and examine an imaginary specimen case in diplomacy—one which will enable me to isolate and to put under the microscope that very factor in human conflict which so often emerges at a later time, when historians have long been reflecting on the issue, but which is so often concealed from contemporaries in the heat of action and in all the bustle of life. For the purpose of assuring that the issue shall confront us more vividly I should like to present this imaginary instance in the guise of something real, something which will come to us as an actual problem of the present day.

Let us suppose then, that the Western powers on the one hand and Russia on the other hand have just defeated Germany and have reduced that country to total surrender. And let it be granted that the Western powers, confronted by the Russian colossus, feel that they cannot afford to allow the defeated Germany to be drawn into the orbit of the Communist system; while Russia, for her part, faced by what to her is the no less formidable West, is ridden by the mathematically equal and opposite fear that the balance will be turned against her for all the future if Germany is enlisted in the non-Communist group. Here then is a case in which the objects of the two parties are mutually exclusive, since if the one side is satisfied the other feels the situation to be utterly desperate; and it is a case not difficult to imagine, since it might be argued (though we

need not commit ourselves to the fact) that it has actually existed in our world since 1945. If we can take this situation for granted for the purpose of argument, and then persuade our minds to perform a piece of abstraction, we may arrive at a result upon which we can do some mathematics. What is required is that we should stretch our imagination to the point of envisaging this particular international predicament in a purer form than either it or anything else ever exists in history. Let us assume that the Soviet group of states on the one hand and the western group on the other are absolutely level in point of virtue and in the moral qualities of the statesmen who conduct their affairs. Further, we will postulate that the level shall be a reasonably high one, that the statesmen on both sides are not saints, of course, competing with one another only in self-renunciation—a situation which would defeat our mathematics—but are moderately virtuous men, as men go in politics, anxious that their countries shall come to no harm, and moved by national self-interest to a degree that we must regard as comparatively reasonable. We will postulate that they have just those faults which men can have who feel themselves to be righteous and well-disposed—both sides anxious to avoid a war, but each desperately unsure about the intentions of the other party; each beset by the devils of fear and suspicion, therefore; and each side locked in its own system of self-righteousness.

Allowing for all this—which means that the problem before us is presented in what I should call its optimum setting—then I should assert that here is a grand dialectical jam of a kind that exasperates men—a terrible deadlock that makes ordinary human beings even a little more wilful than they ordinarily are. Here is the absolute predicament and the irreducible dilemma—for I shall have something to say later to those who assert that it is no genuine predicament at all, and that every schoolboy knows the solution to the problem. Even granting throughout the whole of human nature no more than the ordinary amount of human wilfulness such as we ourselves may be said to possess, here are the ingredients for a grand catastrophe. The greatest war in history could be produced without the intervention of any great criminals who might be out to do deliberate harm in the world. It could be produced between two powers both of which were desperately anxious to avoid a conflict of any sort.

Though the example that I have given is a purely hypothetical one, as I have said—for in the complicated realm of history so clear a pattern will never be found in its absolute purity—still there is a sense in which it typifies an essential human predicament; it illustrates a certain recalcitrancy that may lie in events as such, an intractability that can exist in the human situation itself. Here, in other words, is the mathematical formula—or perhaps one of the formulas—for a state of things which produces what I should call the tragic element in human conflict. As regards the real world of international relations I should put forward the thesis (which, if it is true, would seem to me to be not an unimportant one), that this condition of absolute pre-

dicament or irreducible dilemma lies in the very geometry of human conflict. It is at the basis of the structure of any given episode in that conflict. It is at the basis of all the tensions of the present day, representing even now the residual problem that the world has not solved, the hard nut that we still have to crack. So far as the historian is concerned, here is the basic pattern for all narratives of human conflict, whatever other patterns may be superimposed upon it later. Indeed, as I have said, when the historical reconstruction of a given episode has been carried on for generation upon generation, this is the structure the story tends to acquire as it becomes revised and corrected and reshaped with the passage of time. This tragedy of the absolute human predicament enters into the very fabric of historical narrative in proportion as we move further away from being mere contemporary historians.

Turning again to the hypothetical case which we have been using as our pattern, we may note that not only could the greatest war in history be produced between two powers both of which were moderately virtuous and desperately anxious to prevent a conflict, but such a struggle, far from being a nice, quiet and reasonable affair, would be embittered by the heat of moral indignation on both sides, just because each was so conscious of its own rectitude, so enraged with the other for leaving it without any alternative to war. It is the peculiar characteristic of the situation I am describing—the situation of what I should call Hobbesian fear—that you yourself may vividly feel the terrible fear that you have of the other party, but you cannot enter into the other man's counter-fear, or even understand why he should be particularly nervous. For you know that you yourself mean him no harm, and that you want nothing from him save guarantees for your own safety; and it is never possible for you to realize or remember properly that since he cannot see the inside of your mind, he can never have the same assurance of your intentions that you have. As this operates on both sides the Chinese puzzle is complete in all its interlockings—and neither party sees the nature of the predicament he is in, for he only imagines that the other party is being hostile and unreasonable. It is even possible for each to feel that the other is wilfully withholding the guarantees that would have enabled him to have a sense of security. The resulting conflict is more likely to be hot with moral indignation—one self-righteousness encountering another—than it would have been if the contest had lain between two hard-headed eighteenth century masters of *realpolitik*. In such circumstances the contemporary historians on each side will tend to follow suit, each locked in the combative views of his own nation, and shrieking morality of that particular kind which springs from self-righteousness. That is one of the reasons why contemporary history differs so greatly from what I have called academic history. In all that I am saying I am really asserting, moreover, that the self-righteous are not the true moralists either in history or in life. Those who are less self-righteous may face the world's

problems more squarely, even when they are less clever, than other people.

Pandit Nehru, when he was speaking at Columbia University, made a somewhat moving criticism of both East and West, because in his view they were intent upon what he called a race in armaments. Some people even say that a race in armaments is a cause of war—but nobody actually wills a 'race'; and I personally would rather pity both sides than blame them, for I think that the race in armaments, and even the war that seems to result from it, are caused rather by that tragic human predicament, that situation of Hobbesian fear. All that we can say is that the predicament would not exist, of course, if all the world were like St. Francis of Assisi, and if human nature in general were not streaked with cupidities. The predicament, the race in armaments and the war itself are explained in the last resort, therefore, as the result of man's universal sin. Similarly, suppose two great groups of alliances have been at virtual deadlock for some years, so that even neutral states have begun to assert that war is inevitable—meaning that war is inevitable, human nature being what it is. Suppose you have such a situation, and then one party to the predicament becomes over-exasperated and makes too wilful a decision; suppose in particular that he does it because he thinks that somebody must take a strong line at last; and we will say that he even intends to bluff, but the bluff does not come off and so a great war is brought about. Then, though this man has done wrong I could not personally agree that he should be charged as the sole author of the war and loaded with all the misery of it as though he were the only villain in a melodrama. I could not agree that he should be regarded as guilty in just the way he would have been if he had fallen unprovoked on a flock of innocent lambs. Ultimately the true origin of the war lies in that predicament; and on this basis the melodrama re-shapes itself, assuming more of the character of tragedy—the kind of tragedy in which it is so to speak the situation that gives one a heart-ache, and sometimes, as in the case of *King Lear*, what seem to be little sins may have colossally disproportionate consequences.

The truth is that when faced by this human predicament—this final unsolved problem of human relations—the mind winces and turns to look elsewhere, and statesmen, for their ease, pile all the blame on the handiest scapegoat. Men fix their attention upon what in reality are fringing issues, and they remove these from their proper place on the fringe to the centre of the picture—you can evade all problems by saying that everything is due to the wickedness of King Charles I. The point can be illustrated best perhaps by the process of looking for a moment at its converse. Let us make it clear to ourselves: if in our present-day crises Stalin and his colleagues could be imagined to be as virtuous and well-intentioned as the statemen of the Western world, still our predicament would exist, and there would be the same dilemma concerning the future of Germany—

especially as we, because we look at him from the outside, could never be sure that Stalin's intentions were as good as ours. In any case we could never be sure that if we put our trust in him we should not really be placing weapons into the hands of some villain who might succeed to his power next year, supposing he passed off the stage. Of course, if we are in this same international predicament and the Russians happen to be thieves or adventurers or aggressors or drunkards or sexual perverts to boot, then that is an extra boon which Providence throws into the lap, so to speak of the Western powers—the kind of boon which, to judge from our assertions over a number of centuries, Providence has generally vouchsafed to the British in their wars. Even in such circumstances, however, we are evading an essential problem if we lose sight of the basic predicament—a predicament so exasperating sometimes that it can be responsible for making people more wicked and desperate than they otherwise would have been. It is like the case of the person who owed his neighbour £5 and refused to pay it on the ground that the neighbour was an immoral man and would make a bad use of the money. The moralizing might not be without its justice but in this case it would be introduced as a screen to cover a delinquency of one's own. Or it is like the case of those people who so often, as in 1792, would judge a revolution entirely by its atrocities—evading the structural problem and pouncing upon an incidental issue. I have no doubt it would be a boon to me, supposing I were challenged in debate on a point of history, if I could say: 'Take no notice of this man; he has just come out of prison after serving sentence for forging a cheque'. I should be picking up a fringing issue and turning it into the central issue; and in this way I might use the other person's immorality most unfairly for the purpose of evading a challenge that happened to be inconvenient to myself.

Not only may the problem of war present itself in the acutest possible form irrespective of any difference in morality between the contending parties, but the whole problem and the whole predicament that we are discussing exists absolutely irrespective of any differences in ideology. All the evidence that we have—and it seems to me that we have had very much in the last one hundred years for this particular case—shows that the basic problem would not be fundamentally altered, and would certainly not be avoided, supposing what we were confronted with at the moment were all the power of modern Russia in the hands of the Tsars, instead of the regime of the Soviet. The predicament would not be removed even if there were no Communism in the world at all, or supposing that every state involved in the problem were a Christian state in the sense that so many countries were Christian throughout most of the centuries of modern times. Even supposing Russia were liberal and democratic—supposing the great powers on either side were so situated that their populations could put pressure on the government in the very matter of foreign policy—still the populations would be just as fearful or suspicious

or exasperated or angry as the foreign offices themselves. Indeed it seems to be generally the case that they are more so, unless the knowledge of the predicament is withheld from them.

In so far as international conflicts are concerned, therefore, I am suggesting that after many of the more incidental features of the case have been peeled away, we shall find at the heart of everything a kernel of difficulty which is essentially a problem of diplomacy as such. In fact I personally think that in the international crises of our time, we are muddying the waters and darkening our own minds and playing the very game the Russians want us to play, when we mix our drinks and indulge in a so-called 'ideological' foreign policy, forgetting that the fundamental problems exist, as I have said, independent of the differences in ideology. The truth is that we could very well say to the Russians: 'We would not have allowed you to steal this particular march on us, or to encroach in this particular direction or to dominate defeated Germany even if you had been a Christian empire as in the time of the Tsars.' And, given the distribution of power which existed in Europe in 1945, the old Tsardom would have dominated Poland, Czechoslovokia, Hungary and the Balkans, just as the Soviets do now, though it would have used something different from the Marxian ideology to facilitate the execution of its purposes. All this carries with it the further corollary that we ought to attach very great importance to a study which in England at least has gravely declined and is woefully out of fashion, namely, pure diplomatic history regarded as a technique in itself; for it was just the characteristic of this technical diplomatic history to lay bare the essential geometry of the problem and isolate for examination the fundamental predicament that required a solution. Indeed what I am doing in this paper is to elicit the moral implications of that whole system of thought which is involved in diplomatic history—and I am asserting that the new diplomacy of our time, as well as its dependent forms of historiography, though they are more self-righteous than the old, are in reality less moral, at any rate in certain respects.

We have already noted, however, that in the complicated realm of historical events, no pattern ever appears in a pure and unadulterated form—and certainly, when a diplomatic issue is presented to us for resolution, we can never say that both sides are exactly balanced in point of morality, exactly equal in the virtues of their leading statesmen. The original issue may be aggravated and greatly intensified by the aggressiveness of a politician in one country or the barbarism of a regime in another country; and our fear of the expansion of Russia is considerably increased if Russia implies either a Tsarist despotism or the Communist system. All the same, it is wrong to overlook that original diplomatic predicament which forms the kernel of the problem requiring to be solved; and it is a mistake to allow the incidental matters or the attendant circumstances to drive that essential issue out of our minds. I could express the point, for example —or I could illustrate its implications—by noting that we should not

like to be conquered by Russia even if Russia were not a Communist state. Alternatively I might say that supposing it could be made out that there were general reasons for conceding that Spain had a right to Gibraltar, it is not clear that the British would be justified in withholding that possession merely because they disliked the present regime in Spain and disapproved of General Franco. It was perhaps one of the virtues of the older type of diplomacy that in time of war it did not allow itself to be entirely obsessed by the question of the responsibility for the resort to violence—did not merely hark back continually to the actual occasion of the outbreak—but recognized that the war itself was partly tragedy, that is to say, partly due to a predicament. Attention was concentrated rather on the kind of world which would be produced once the victory had been achieved, and the aim was not so much to punish the culprits, but rather to make sure that there would be a tolerable balance of forces at the finish. Even after the battle of Waterloo, the enemies of Napoleon did not allow themselves to be moved by the desire of giving due punishment to France, though that country had kept the world at war for over twenty years and had given itself over to Napoleon for a second time, after his return from Elba. France in 1815 lost practically none of the territory she had held before the outbreak of war, and in a remarkably short time she was readmitted to the comity of nations; and yet now we know that even the creators of the peace of 1815 made a mistake in fearing still that France would always be the aggressor; in consequence of which they insisted upon installing a strong Prussia in the Rhineland to defend Germany against France, and so helped the coming giant to be stronger than ever, because they had been too rigidly obsessed with the danger that had troubled them in the past. The essential thing is to guard against the kind of war which, if you win it absolutely, will produce another 'predicament' worse than the one you started with.

We of the twentieth century have not been as wise as the men of over a hundred years ago. The great diplomatic issue that emerged—or rather re-emerged—in Europe in the early years of this present century concerned the question whether Russia or Germany should dominate those countries of central and eastern Europe which run from Poland, through Czechoslovokia and Hungary to what we now call Yugoslavia and the Balkans. This is how it came about that the occasion for the war of 1914 was an episode involving Bosnia and Serbia, while the occasion for the war of 1939 occurred in regions concerning which Lloyd George had long before expressed his apprehensions—namely in Czechoslovakia and in Poland. Those two wars were embarrassing in certain respects for Great Britain, for though we claimed that we were fighting for democracy we were allied in the former case with Tsarist Russia, where the Jews had been oppressed, and the Poles were held in subjection, and the Baltic nations were prevented from achieving state-hood; while in the case of the second World War we were the allies of the Soviet System. So

far as I can interpret European history in general, the line of central European states which were in question—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, etc.—can flourish beautifully when both Germany and Russia are reduced to impotence, as they were in the fifteenth century, and as they came to be again for a period after 1919. The same states may preserve their independence provided both Germany and Russia are strong, so that when the giant on the one side seeks to oppress them they can look for help to the giant on the other side. It is bound to be sad, however, for Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc., if only one of these giants is left standing and there is no other great power in the vicinity to challenge or check this monster. Indeed, we have seen how even in the last few years America, England and the nations of Western Europe have been unable to prevent this whole line of states from coming quite into the power of the Russian bear. Supposing wars to be necessary and unavoidable—as indeed they seem to be sometimes—it might still be a question whether we have conducted ours with a right mentality or with a proper grasp of the essential issues. In respect of the great diplomatic problem of the twentieth century, we may wonder sometimes whether Russia was so much more virtuous than Germany as to make it worth the lives of tens of millions of people in two wars to insure that she (as a Communist System—or even as a Tsarist Empire) should gain such an unchallenged and exclusive hold over that line of central European states as Germany never had in all her history, and never could have had unless Russia had first been wiped out as a great state. For it is just that kind of question—the question of the redistribution of territorial power—which war decides. We cannot spread democracy by war, which barbarizes peoples and tends rather to make democracy more impracticable over a greater area of the European continent.

The supporters of the new diplomacy, which has emerged since the opening of the epoch of World Wars, like to tell us that the whole problem we have been discussing does not exist, because it ought not to exist. In any case, there is no Chinese puzzle at all, they say, for, whatever the issue might be, we could easily dispose of it by referring it to a conference or sending it to the United Nations. Against these specialists in wishful thinking it must be asserted that the kind of human predicament which we have been discussing is not merely so far without a solution, but the whole condition is a standing feature of mankind in world-history. If the whole of Russia and the entire body of its satellites were to be buried under the deepest oceans from this very night, the predicament would still be with us to-morrow, though the terms of it would be transposed by a regrouping of the remaining powers. Supposing there were no Russian power in existence, supposing Germany herself were lying prostrate as a beaten and ineffective nation, and supposing the help of America were not essential to everybody concerned—all that fine show of unanimity between the countries of Western Europe, all that co-operation induced by the threat of an immediate danger, would break down into bitter-

ness and anarchy. And if the issue which divides the world at a given moment were referred to a conference-table, then, though many good things might be achieved, we should not have eliminated the predicament which was most crucial—we should merely find it transplanted into the bosom of the conference itself. Even the organization of the United Nations has not proved essentially different in this respect from the case of the former League which had its headquarters in Geneva; and though the problem is transposed somewhat, so that different nations and different problems now produce the stumbling-block, the new international order has not in fact prevented powers from remaining armed as never before, and racing one another in the development of the atomic bomb.

It was once my feeling that if, in a European crisis, Great Britain pressed for the assembly of a conference, while Germany rejected that procedure, then Germany was clearly in the wrong and my own country was plainly on the side of the angels. Unfortunately it comes to be borne in upon one's mind as one studies these matters that conferences themselves are only too liable to be the arena for a kind of power-politics; and the greater states, in the very nature of things, hold a predominance in them which bears some proportion to their might. It even became evident to me that sometimes it was calculable in advance how the votes would be distributed if a conference met, since these would be affected by the alliances and affiliations of the various governments concerned, and might even be decided by sympathies in ideology. Supposing it became clear that if a conference were assembled the result was a foregone conclusion and Germany was so to speak outvoted in advance, I began to wonder whether in such a case she was necessarily more selfish than anybody else when she refused to put her head in the noose—I began to wonder also whether the virtues of Britain were quite so much to boast about when they coincided so nicely with her interests. This argument might be projected on to a wider canvas altogether; for without doubting the good intensions of the men who have ruled England in the last few decades, one must note that if a Machiavellian imperialist statesman had happened to be governing us with purely egotistical purposes in view, he would have found the conference method the best way of promoting our national interests, indeed the only way in view of the decline of actual British power and in view of the general distribution of forces in the world. In other words Great Britain in our time has been in a position which we must regard as fortunate in a certain respect, in that the policy which altruism would have dictated to her happened to be the same as the one which self-interest would demand —so that, though the conference method has been promoted so often by Englishmen who were only conscious of it as a noble aspiration, it has also been described as the only method of *real-politik* left to us. The conference method is more advantageous to us than any decision to measure forces with a rival, even if the voting should go against us on occasion in a matter of some moment to us.

But when I take the crucial case and imagine a real predicament —when I think of the kind of issue which decides whether a state or an empire goes up or down in the world—then I find myself in a position of some doubt even in regard to Great Britain. Supposing it to be the case that the loss of our overseas possessions would bring about a serious reduction in the standard of living of the British people, and supposing a motion were to be proposed that all forms of colony or of subjection or of dependency were to be abolished through the wide world—I, in a situation of this kind, should like to know what the attitude of the government of my country would be. In particular I should like to know what its attitude would be to the idea of submitting such an issue to a conference or assembly in which the Communists were known in advance to have the majority of votes. I should like to know what my country would do on the assumption that we still had enough power to make a valid and independent choice. Where the conflict is really a cut-throat one it seems to me that the conference method does not put an end to the predicament but merely changes the locality and the setting of it. The whole method is liable to break down if either the Communists or the non-Communists can be fairly sure in advance that on critical issues the other party is going to have the majority. And in any case I am not clear that anybody has ever devised a form of political machinery that could not somehow or other be manipulated by ill-intentioned people in the possession of power.

Like the Germans, we sometimes allow the academic and professorial mind to have too much sway among us; and with us this has helped to give currency to the heresy that everything can be settled if men will only sit together at a table—a view which may be justified on many occasions but which does not prove to be correct when the conflicting parties are in the extreme kind of predicament we have been discussing. Where the predicament really exists and the question is one of those which decide whether states are to go up or down in the world, those who do have the power will not allow themselves to be talked or voted out of their strategic positions, any more than empires will go under without putting up a fight, supposing a fight to be possible at all. Europeans have had hundreds of years in which to discuss theological problems, but mere discussion round a table has not brought them into agreement on the disputed points. This was the kind of issue upon which men can at worst agree to disagree, though I note that ecclesiastical systems were slow to come to this arrangement and they went on fighting one another, using weapons that kill, as long as it was feasible to fight at all. But if two different countries are claiming Gibraltar it is not so easy to settle the matter by saying that the parties can agree to disagree. The conference method does not get rid of the difficuty—it merely transplants the whole predicament into another place.

While we are at war, and the conflict is a matter of life or death for us, we may hardly have any part of our minds free for devoting

to a general survey of the whole predicament in which the human race is standing. When the war is over, however, a time of healing ought to come, and it is our duty to carry all our problems to further analysis. Politicians, in the hurry of affairs, and in the stress of conflict, may hardly have an opportunity to cover the problem in all all-embracing survey, for we must regard them as generally acting under great pressures. We in universities, however—and especially those of us who study history—have a duty to think in longer terms and seize upon the problem precisely where the difficulties are most challenging. We ought to be straining our minds to think of new things and to enlarge the bounds of understanding; for though our enlarged understanding of the problem will not necessarily prevent war, it may remove some of the unwisdom which has made victory itself so much more disappointing in its results than it otherwise might have been.

SLOWLY

A Poem for Children

Slowly the tide creeps up the sand,
Slowly the shadows cross the land.
Slowly the cart-horse pulls his mile,
Slowly the old man mounts the stile.

Slowly the hands move round the clock,
Slowly the dew dries on the dock.
Slow is the snail—but slowest of all
The green moss spreads on the old brick wall.

JAMES REEVES

VERGIL AND HOMER

W. F. JACKSON KNIGHT

NO one man ever made a great poem. Inspiration, at least, is needed to help; or perhaps the Muses. The Muses are, or include within their significance, the whole store of earlier poetry which a great poet needs to actuate him; so they were interpreted by the late E. T. Owen. Inspiration from the Greek Muses was normally sane and wise, as Jonathan Tate has been explaining. But it was inspiration. 'The imagination', said Petronius, 'will not act until it has been flooded by a vast torrent of reading'. It is a necessary duty of poets to set themselves in their right place within their poetic tradition, among the dead poets. This important expression of the matter by T. S. Eliot which he and others have offered, is familiar and famous. So are, or should be, the researches of John Livingstone Lowes and Rosamund E. M. Harding. They all help to explain how it is that C. G. Jung is right to say that 'great poetry draws its life from the life of mankind'.

A living past continues biologically in the transmission of physical genes. The past lives equally in poetic transmission. 'The generations of all time and all the lovely dead are there.' The lines of Oliver St. John Gogarty, continuing the thought of Propertius on the world beyond the gates of death, fit the world of poetry just as well.

'Poetry should be anonymous; but news should be signed.' For news is of the moment, and it is personal to the reporter. Poetry, on the other hand, should be even 'more philosophical than history' because it tells, not what happens, but 'just the sort of thing which would happen'. It is always hard to go beyond Aristotle, but some subsequent comments are enlightening. Among them is that of the late A. N. Whitehead:

> Art has a creative function in human experience when it reveals as in a flash intimate absolute Truth regarding the nature of things. This service of Art is even hindered by trivial truths of detail. Such petty conformations place in the foreground the superficialities of sense experience.

There is much in the system constructed by Carl Kerényi which, for those who accept it, can clarify the positive content attributed to poetry in such announcements. Kerényi investigates mythology. For him the mythical world of any people has a reality and objectivity of its own, and awaits for its disclosure a mythical poet, just as the objective tonal world awaits a musician. In short survey of Kerényi's doctrine, Alexander Altmann notes that that objectivity is particularly obvious in folk-song and anonymous saga. The minstrels rather experienced than created their mythical realm. He recalls Michael Angelo's saying that 'there is no thought which the sculptor expresses in marble that does not exist there already'. The known, reported

experiences of many musicians and poets, for example Mozart, Coleridge, Housman and Eliot, offer confirmation within their limits; works of art are perhaps regularly discovered, rather than constructed, by the artists, and sometimes the totality of a work of art is given to an artist all in a flash. Artistic discovery is often delivered during a mood different from the mood of every day. Dante and Milton attributed their poetry to the inspiration of the divine Muse in the night. Pindar, in a passage praised by Gilbert Norwood, and perhaps incomparable as a short account of the whole matter, claimed that 'the speech which is fetched from the deep of the mind, with aid from the Graces, has longer life than any deed'.

Kerényi believes that there was at first a 'primordial stage of inexpressible awareness of the divine'. The more profoundly consciousness recaptures it, the more powerful a myth or work of art is. This doctrine is not incompatible with Whitehead's conception of absolute truth revealed in works of art. Perhaps it does not go so far; perhaps it goes farther.

The decision rests with philosophy, not with poetic commentary. But poetic commentary must recognize that poetry compresses experience and thought into generalizations.

E. V. Rieu has said that Homer is not about heroes. He has also said that Homer never nods. That is, Homer accurately tells the truth about the human world. He does not tell mistaken stories about incomprehensible beings of long ago. Perhaps that goes beyond Aristotle. 'Homer is the only poet who can make his lies look like the truth.' Possibly they were not lies at all, but generalizations. Tennyson said that he had made the moated grange in his poem out of a great number of moated granges which he had seen. Such is the art or the inspiration. But an appearance of contemporary momentary actuality must help. Indeed, Blake insisted on it, and denounced generalization. The eternal theme of martyrdom is the more eloquent at present when it is set in a modern society of cocktail parties and psychotherapy.

To be right a poem must agree with experience, and achieve very many true generalizations. If so, it will have poetic truth. An epic poem should clearly have the kind of poetic truth which was called by Shelley epic truth, and was implicitly attributed to Homer by him. This epic truth, a profound conception not fully to be understood in lack of any explanation by Shelley, must surely be truth reached from a very great number of generalizations from a very extensive experience. And in fact, as the late C. R. Buxton in particular explained, the great epics each express something like a whole age of human culture, with its questions, its answers, and its permanent gains. An age may sometimes be expressed in works which are not strictly poems, as according to Arnold Toynbee the age of the Roman Principate was expressed in the books of Saint Augustine. So Livy, in a prose epic, expressed the age of the Roman Republic. Perhaps Livy was unhindered 'by trivial truths of detail'; but A. Monigliano

is right to insist that Livy reached the wider and deeper kind of truth, that is, the truth which comes by poetic generalization, for Livy's picture of old Rome included what mattered most. Augusto Rostagni has shown that Livy at first strongly influenced Vergil, and that later he was in turn influenced by him. They were, of course, harmonious. Livy expressed the older Rome, and perhaps more. Vergil expressed that Rome also, and he expressed, very certainly, very much more besides.

There are reasons why poetry ought to be able to reach and to generalize more experience than is possible to works in prose. To attempt to list the reasons would be like trying to define poetry. Perhaps one of them is in the poetic faculty, helped by metre and other kinds of rhythm, of searching deeply in mental layers far below normal consciousness. Another may be in the poetic freedom to use symbols, and another in the eloquence of balanced structure. And poetry need not adhere to the particularities of any single time and place. That is, poetry is the more eloquent on account of conventions and anachronisms, if those old words still serve. It can be removed from any one system of actuality, and gains perspective at the start. Experience is foreshortened, and important lines stand out, as in air-photography. That is how, as C. M. Bowra shews, Camoens in *Os Lusiadas* reveals, in Vergilian patterns, the true issues, such as the issue between civilization and barbarism, which were important in the Portuguese expansion. Vasco da Gama himself, who knew neither where he was going, nor, after he had returned, where he had been, was too near to actualities to see the broad issues as they energed, not long afterwards, in the poem.

'The many-minded Homer,' in the brilliant phrase of W. B. Yeats, expressed an experience long and rich indeed. Almost exactly two hundred years ago Giambattista Vico was publishing the opinion that Homer's birth-place was claimed by many Greeks because in fact Homer was the whole Greek people. In saying this Vico was as usual profound, whether in fact Homer was an individual, a committee, or a corporation, as L. A. MacKay expresses the choice. Certainly poetry can be made by a plurality of poets, as boys compose school plays by discussion, and as country people in Spain were lately said to compose ballads, debating variants with one another, so that it could scarcely be known who deserved credit for each line. It is fair also to cite radio-scripts, and indeed, as M. E. Hewlett recalls, the Bible itself. Even if Goethe exaggerated when he claimed that it is not genius, but sincerity, which is rare, Victor Bérard also tended towards some exaggeration when, believing in both multiple authorship for the Homeric poems and also in their artistic unity and grandeur, he found it hard to concede that interpolators or rhapsodists could be capable of such good poetry. But they might well be capable of it, being members of the Greek people at a period of self-expressive power. The thought of Vico, Gilbert Murray and Kerényi, in convergence or in succession, can clarify the obscurity. Keats might have agreed, even

if Homer can hardly now be identified as nothing but a series of minstrels, each 'leaving great verse unto a little clan'. The matter is important. For, to read Vergil rightly, few things are so important as to understand that Vergil and Homer are peers, world-poets in a single tradition.

Shelley called Homer the first epic poet. It is safe to say that that means that in Homer, for the first time, sufficient human experience was sufficiently distilled and reduced to epic truth. To change the metaphor, Homer first drew succinct and precise poetic conclusions from very many particulars. He spanned many centuries and many cities and minds of men. That is why the time and place of Homer have been so hard to fix. The difficulty marks not the failure of the scholars, but the success of Homer. It is exactly like the difficulty of fixing and limiting the meanings of phrases in Vergil. The difficulty reveals not the deficiency of the commentators but Vergil's intricate might.

The tradition of Homeric poetry looks more like the tradition of the old Irish stories than any other. Our Homer is full of memories gathered and retained during the centuries. Already W. E. Gladstone observed that Homer mentions Thebes in Egypt as it had been in the fifteenth century, before power passed from it. Allusions are however hard to fix, for example the famous broach in the *Odyssey*, and in the *Iliad* the Cup of Nestor, to which Gitti has just attributed a post-Mycenaean date, in support of his view that four to six centuries would hardly have elapsed between the events narrated by Homer, and Homer himself. It is here that the Irish parallel is instructive, for the Irish stories were developing for quite as long as that before they were written down, and they, unlike the Greek poems, have survived in great numbers, which allow comparison between variant versions of the same story. In the judgement of Eileen Hall, the stories became, as time passed less terse and manly, they were more freely and boldly altered by the minstrels, and they grew more artistic, with increased moral interest, and elaboration of symbolism. Like the tale of Troy, the favourite tale of Cuchúlain tended to supplant others. Clearly the old material was made to express in many transformations the changing thoughts, feelings, and intuitions of many individuals in many generations. The old material is far from being all that there is in the mature versions, but it has left its record in him. It is not one mind, or one group of contemporary minds, which is reflected in heroic story, and there is not one single point in time and space to which heroic story is fixed.

The Homeric poems also collected power through many transformations. Yet in them, and perhaps in all good epic, there is a point of focus. The judgement of one poet, or perhaps two or three poets, decided the form in which the Homeric poems, without many important changes afterwards, should survive fixed. The moderate estimate of the data, preferred by for example, K. O. Müller long since, and by H. T. Wade-Gery now, is supported by various information, lately

gathered, against low estimates, such as Bethe's, and the very early dates now proposed by Renata von Scheliha and Gitti. The new surveys of Homeric language by Paul Mazon, W. Bedell Stanford, and A. Severyns have decided that at least a few organic passages have Ionic forms which are not early, and which cannot be restored to any early original spelling. Another argument of Severyns is that the similes have the marks of a single mind, the mind of a man not princely or heroic, but used to ordinary life, and loving simple and domestic things. Perhaps the temper of this Homer is not far from the condition of the later Danai, still mainly lost to history, whose humorous, whimsical, half-European and half-Oriental sculpture was found in 1945 at Kara Tepe by a Turkish Archaeologist, and reported, with assignation to the ninth century, by John Garstang in 1948.

In the metaphor of Sir John Myers, there was a time when the crucible and the mould came together, and many things lost the fluidity of becoming, and began to be, existing henceforward fixed in Homer's poetic system. Many enquirers are likely soon to bring that time nearer to the light of history, continuing for example the work of Charles Picard. There must have existed human societies on the frontier between Europe and Asia in which at least the form of the Homeric poems will soon cease to seem unnatural or surprising. Long narratives were there developed artistically from version to version, and, as in the northern custom lately described by Norah K. Chadwick, they were recited in order, during successive sessions, on many days. There is no difficulty in understanding that, as the unemended notices plainly admit, the Homeric poems were not constructed, but reconstructed at Athens by command of Peisistratus.

But it is sufficient for the present argument that Homer's time and place have been very properly doubted, even if now the doubts are likely to be resolved. The doubts concerning the times and the places in the represented world of the poems are still more important. They are due to the artistic power of generalization possessed by Homer or indeed by 'the Greek people', with whom, at least in some partial sense, he certainly shared an identity.

Francis Berry, a modern poet of considerable importance, was contemplating a poem on his own experiences in Malta, G.C. during the second World War; and he quickly decided to make the ostensible subject of the poem the siege of Malta in A.D. 1564. Shortly defined, poetry is a way of saying two things at once. It may compress together or superimpose very many individual actualities, and consequently many people, things, times and places may grow together into new identities, in which afterwards some of the original facts may be noticed, to the mistaken exclusion of others. The Homeric world can be made to look even in detail very much like the Mycenaean world. The agreement appears as impressive in the books of Dörpfeld and of his successor, Heinrich Rüter. Renata von Scheliha is not far from agreement with Andrew Lang, and an early date is judiciously defended by Gitti. Emile Mireaux finds an original for Agamemnon

in Pheidon of Argos, and supplies other correspondence to match this. Victor Bérard, with great learning and skill, represented what to others is the Mycenaean world of Homer as the later world of Greek colonists in competition with Phoenician forerunners. Rhys Carpenter finds in the *Odyssey* references to Egypt which for him can only indicate Egypt at the end of the seventh century, and in the *Iliad* he finds allusions which he takes to be not very much older. Meanwhile, of course, he recognizes in the poems, and sometimes successfully traces, other memories, some very ancient indeed. These are all opinions recently advanced and are modern, and the divergence, except that not much is now heard of a sixth-century date for Homer, is almost as great as ever. The reason for the divergence is not solely that the scholars are fools or knaves, but that Homer was a great epic poet. He generalized experience so profoundly that his poetry suits situations six centuries, or more, apart. Rhys Carpenter even finds in the battle of Odysseus with the Laestrygonians a description of a battle, in the same place, which was fought in A.D. 1421. Homer could see and manipulate the 'permanent facts'. The great poems somehow 'cover everything'.

The characters in the Homeric poems are too human to be heroes, as E. V. Rieu observed. But, in two other senses, they are also too heroic to be human beings. Again difficulties of interpretation indicate poetic merit. One reason why the poems are so good is that their characterization is so good, far better than in any other ancient fiction. Another is that so much is represented in many of the characters. The old view that the heroes are 'faded gods' is, on the whole, truer than the naïve belief that they belong directly to history. J. A. K. Thomson's researches concerning Odysseus and Penelope are alone enough to shake that belief. The important heroes were on the whole very much as Pausanias represents them before they acquired the personalities which they have in Homer. They were superhuman presences in shrines, as Helen is still a superhuman presence in Rhodes, and as she had been for a long time before she wept in Homer's Troy. Charles Autran has shown the importance of priests and shrines in the generation of Greek heroic story. He, however, led by parallels such as the heroic tradition of Japan, is inclined to allow considerable historicity to the Trojan war. Whatever the exact truth may be, it is at least clear that a man may first live on earth and may then be tended as a hero after death. He may become a new hero or saint, or he may acquire some older identity. He may rise in the scale and he may descend again. The evolution of Saint George, as it was traced by the late Meta E. Williams, is instructive. He was once an early Egyptian god, pictured spearing a crocodile. He became a pre-Christian hero or saint with a shrine in the western desert. His cult became Christian and spread to Syria. In the early Christian centuries he acquired the name George and a life-history as an officer of Constantine, supposed to have been finally martyred for his faith. His fame spread west, and grew, in iconography and sacred story, and is strong

to-day. The biography, though it is sometimes believed literally, is fictitious, but the fame may have truth. There is nothing in any of his origins to disprove Lord Dowding's conviction that Saint George is now a living spirit, fighting evil.

Accordingly, Homeric heroes may have been men originally or they may not, and they may have undergone many transformations, so that it is hard to say, sometimes, whether a hero, so transformed, is really the same hero, even if he has the same name as before. The Achilles of Pausanias, who tore young maidens to pieces on the White Island, is scarcely the same person as the Achilles of Homer. Yet he is not entirely different. Even in Homer some of the ferocity remains, and becomes artistically eloquent for the gain of humanity. In the poetry there is old and new together.

The ancient fear of the daemonic Achilles enriches Homeric poetry. So do other stresses and tensions, and among them in particular the stress and tension of change in social organization and discipline. In this there is no small interest. The change is a permanent fact in the living past of Homer, and of ourselves also, and the poetry turns it to enrichment by assimilation. But it has also a peculiar importance in that living past, for it, in particular, made the Greek present and our own.

> The whole of human history does not contain a single instance of a society which has advanced to the rationalistic condition unless its females have been born into an absolutely monogamous tradition, nor is there any example of a group which has retained its high position in the cultural scale when less rigorous customs have become part of the inherited tradition of all its members. Compulsory lifelong association [of husband and wife] approached nearest and for the longest time, has meant the highest cultural position ever reached.

This is one of the conclusions reached by the late J. D. Unwin, after a thorough examination of eighty human societies.

Unwin's researches appear to prove that human societies always increase in energy, memory and intellectual power in proportion as they have adopted stricter sexual discipline. Concurrently with this increase, there is a certain religious development, from conditions in which the dead are little considered, through the practice of tending of individual dead men as heroes, to monotheism, and after that to rationalism. Unwin discusses the stages at length. An important stage is monotheism, and it is regularly associated with monogamy and monarchy. Without reference to the full argument, it is already clear that Homer's epic truth is the more comprehensive because his poetry is expressive of some immensely important steps in man's ascent. Homer arrays in artistic organization the pre-heroic, the heroic and the divine. And Homer, in his only epigram, as Vernon Rendall calls it, praises as the best thing in life the happiness of a faithful husband and wife in their home. Thus far Homer tells the story of secular mankind.

Homer is about heroes, and Homer is not about heroes. The question of Homer is interwoven with the heroic, perhaps in many

senses of the word. Homer makes a spatial pattern of the temporal sequence in which imagined forms became heroes, gods, and human men very like ourselves, and in which, concurrently and causally, the relations of individuals in their societies altered towards civilization, with change of custom and law. Many time-sequences are scaled down almost until they are level. Some Homeric people and things are ultimately very old, but not all. Many may seem to be, or may even actually be, almost or quite historical, of one period or place. Homer's Troy itself is probably a blend, but Homer's Mycenae is Mycenae alone, at least in the core of its reference. The important people and things in Homer are normally poetic generalizations, inheriting something from many predecessors and resulting from recurrent actualities. Ritual begins the process of generalization which poetic art continues. Homer's myths are successors to ritual myths. They are versions of sacred stories told at shrines, at first in order to guide and to preserve, and later in order to explain, rituals performed at them. The myth-ritual theory has seemed inapplicable to Greek mythology. But that is because the origins in ritual belong to widely various places and times, and centuries of artistic alteration and re-alteration have overlaid them. Just what true historical tradition was transmitted from early to classical Greece is still hard to estimate. Alberto Gitti's warning that too few Greek historians have followed Beloch in learning from Niebuhr's critical approach to Roman history is probably salutary, and Lord Raglan is on the whole right to argue that in general the heroes of tradition are figures not of history but of ritual. Ritual, repeated often, amid violent hopes and fears, and necessarily remembered from year to year, is far more permanently and accurately transmitted than the recollection of historical events, which are even now easily confused or neglected, and which, in the past, were either soon forgotten, or recalled in increasingly inexact contaminations. The great stories everywhere are not usually about the historical figures concerned in great events. They are about imagined figures, generalized from ritual, itself perhaps originating from habitual currents of emotion, which create, in Kerényi's sense, an objective mythology, awaiting expression.

At many stages charges from ritual dominated configurations in Homer. A full examination of the problem is due, but must be postponed. Identifications of ritual origins proposed by Rhys Carpenter, G. Rachel Levy, and Emile Mireaux may be hitherto controversial, but the direction is right. Compressed with Homeric poetry are the countless passionate memories, mystically transmitted and shared, which have descended down many long lines of ritual recurrence.

That may legitimately be said, but only provided that full weight is allowed to the celebrated critical arguments of H. J. Rose, of which two new applications have only just been made known. Traces of old-fashioned barbarous and savage behaviours, thoughts, and superstitions among the Greeks are easily exaggerated, and have been lightly assumed to prove more than they can. It is necessary to face

the critical arguments, but it is also necessary to adopt a long and wide perspective which admits the Ancient East to its view. Such a perspective is necessary so that the compressive power of Homer, and his parallel similarity to other epochal poets, may be rightly estimated.

To be classical, according to T. S. Eliot, a poet must command at least two languages. It was by a fine insight that he chose that requirement as one of four necessary conditions, fulfilled in particular by Vergil, who is pre-eminently classical. But Homer fulfilled the condition too. He may not have known two languages, but interchange between more than two has helped to make his poetry. Charles Autran has been enabled by his incomparable erudition to make this fact much more clear and certain than before, and to shew its importance for the first time. The impact of two cultures on each other certainly fertilizes one or both. The late H. M. Chadwick associated the rise of epic poetry in many places with the impact of a more advanced on a less advanced culture, an impact which, for him, occurred when Greeks from the north met Mycenaeans. Opinions change quickly, and new complications are discovered, but this kind of dynamic contact certainly happened often. Many ethnic and cultured thrusts came from the east, and some from the north. Giuliano Bonfante and Benito Gaya Nuño have shown from place-names the probability that the Philistines passed down the Adriatic coastland on their way to south-western Asia, and even left traces of themselves to the west of the Adriatic. L. A. MacKay has lately emphasized the importance of Epirus and Illyria as origins of Greek peoples. Three generations ago Sir William Geddes, in a work of rigorous method, propounded a theory that the core of the *Iliad* was composed in Thessaly, and that the rest of it, and the whole of the *Odyssey*, are the work of a poet, or, less probably, poets, who lived on the coast of Asia Minor. Homer's Achilles has a temperament which has survived in exact likeness among modern Albanians, whose feuds, for example, have continued on the Homeric pattern.

Blended and compressed in Homer are not only ritual memories, but also memories of different human groups impinging on one another by various ways. If a long enough time is considered, very many can be relevantly identified; perhaps even, as G. Rachel Levy hints, the minds of the new and of the old stone age meet visibly together in the background of Homer. Most important of all, however, is the eruption southwards, from the steppes south-west of central Asia, of 'The Charioteers'. Again it is to Charles Autran that reference must be made for all this great topic. What is now known is different, sometimes subtly, from what had been said before. It is not exactly a question of north and south, or of Indo-European in distinction from other dialects of speech. But, before and after 2000 B.C., the Charioteers did indeed introduce southwards, with horse-warfare, a new kind, or new kinds, of mind and of culture too. Their Asia as well as the hieratic Asia before them and the Asia of Geometric influence after them, affected the Greeks. The Achaeans themselves,

with their names in *eus,* came through Asia from Strabo's 'Old Achaea' to the east of the Black Sea shore. There were other groups from Asia, too, principally perhaps great families installed in centres of religion and culture in Greece and elsewhere, and they created the rich and powerful Ægean world of which excavation has rendered splendid, but fragmentary, reports. Who among them were Greeks, and who were not, were questions which could not be asked until many centuries later. There may well have been fighting in Greece between steppic Charioteers, some arriving from the north and some from the east.

According to Ernst Robert Curtius the Greeks of the full Hellenic centuries, unlike the Italo-Celts, retained very little of the religion of the earlier peoples who had spoken Indo-European dialects; their religion was Aegaean, that is, apparently a religion of Asia, little changed by the Charioteers. Yet, not to mention early researches of Max Müller and others, the late A. N. Hocart found interesting fragmentary traces among the Greeks of a widely distributed dual system of ritual kingship, with its theology associated with Eurasian speakers of Indo-European, and reaching to Fiji and the African Yoruba. And now, however Greek religion itself may best be described, L. R. Palmer has been proving that Greek law and morality are rather northern than anything else. In Asia, E. Cavaignac has stressed the contrast between the old southern oriental mind, and the mind of the Hittites, who first appear with a classical, or European, temper of thought obviously characteristic of them.

Rhys Carpenter may even be right to see in Homer's Odysseus some trace of an Oydsseus who had once been a bear, superstitiously tended. But Homer's story of the *Siege of Troy* is notably modelled on sieges and sacks in and near Babylonia which occurred before 2000 B.C., for example operations against Lagash, Ur, and Babylon itself. There are the originals of 'the sacred veil' of the defensive city-goddess, and of the Apollo who in the *Iliad* shoots arrows of plague. Ishtar assembles the enemy against Erech, and Girra, the plague God, is associated with an attack on Babylon; he is in part the same not only as Homer's Apollo, but also as his own Asiatic forerunners, and as the later Saint Sebastian, martyred with arrows, whom Rabelais knew as the saint who gave protection from the plague. In the tale of Troy there is eastern city-sanctity, and, old long before Homer, there is the strange motive of the wooden horse, which must ultimately be due to the Charioteers and to thoughts which they had, or occasioned in others, long before their descendants gave shape and manner to the fighters on the Trojan plain. Homer makes little of the older faiths, but they are there below his glittering surfaces. And they entered into his artistic blend.

The Charioteers spread their influence as far as Britain, North Africa, and Japan; and the pre-history of Trojan narrative can sometimes be traced back through their story. So it is that the adventures of Menelaus and Helen are paralleled by variants from India and

Java, and so it is that one of the ritual stresses which have left a mark, the stress of change in marriage customs, has moulded both Indian epic and the *Odyssey*. In Indian epic there is a unique incident, in which, contrary to the law of the Charioteers, a princess has to choose her own husband. In the *Odyssey* Penelope is clearly wanted to choose for herself a husband from among the suitors. Yet the suitors themselves gather just as if they are to take part as candidates in betrothal assemblies of later Greece, at which of course the choice rested with the girl's father. This transition, identified in Homer by Renata von Scheliha, and the conflict which it brought, may be very ancient, but in Greece, as elsewhere, the effects have survived. Their vitality in classical Greece have been rightly emphasized for different reasons by both George Thomson and Colin Hardie. Clytaemnestra and Oedipus had interest for Athens, for, however old was the change from matrilineal to agnatic organization, the extant marks of it are alone enough to attest it, at least for some people in some places. It looks like a common inheritance in Greece and in India. There, as John Gordon Vernon recalls, Sita's father, Janaka, said in the story 'I have a daughter Sita, not born of men, but sprung from the furrow as I ploughed the field and hallowed it. On him, who bends the bow, I will bestow my daughter'. And Rama did so. Such was the material open to Homer and his predecessors. The social stresses of the conflict, having ritual importance, must have been severe. They enriched the Homeric blend.

Homeric epic mattered long ago, and as E. V. Rieu has proved matters still. That is because it is about things which matter and which have mattered. Among those things are love and marriage, on which both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* turn, marking the ancient and enduring fight for the happiness of home. The poems represent the approach to monogamy and monotheism in the scheme of J. D. Unwin. They are salutary still, in an age when, as Lady Violet Bonham-Carter says, average behaviour is not enough. The poems are the more salutary, because their art is delicate and profound. Edmond Beaujon, investigating the subtle secret of it, has shewn that Homer presents the right order of society and of home as a ritual, symbolic, and effective truth. Behind Homer, and indeed in Homer, is the ancient sacred marriage, which makes the flowers grow. Greek myth, as Gilbert Murray has proposed, remembered and unified it from many local rites, of which by no means all need have been performed in Greece. The old superstition, if that is the right word, is in Homer transformed, and made human. The secure union of a very human king and queen brings peace, plenty, and happiness, as by a ritual stability. The human people of Homer are heroic at least in Beaujon's sense, for they achieve what only heroes can achieve—'Symbolic Action'.

In Unwin's scheme, monogamous phases are succeeded by rationalism and decadence, with perverted emotions. Inflamed friendship, characteristic of classical Greece, is hinted, as H. J. Rose lately

recalled, in the *Iliad*. The loyalty between Achilles and Patroclus should have been creative, but, since it was feverish, it was destructive. It is because Achilles himself, at his worst, was childish, that he saw Patroclus as a little girl, running in tears to her mother. The *Iliad*, therefore, very subtly marks the danger of decadence, a danger which the *Odyssey* srongly meets. How subtly Homer, or a predecessor, went to work is brilliantly suggested by Fritz Shadewaldt and Renata von Scheliha. The suggestion is that the poet invented Patroclus, and invented a name for him; the poet himself was the 'father' who brought Patroclus 'fame'. Now Patroclus in the *Iliad* derives his dramatic part from Cleopatra, the wife of Meleager in an old poem now lost, who persuaded Meleager to fight, when others would not persuade him. Homer or another, building the *Iliad* on the plan of the *Meleagrid*, may therefore have neatly inverted the syllables of Cleopatra's name; and the message is there, for those who have ears to hear. If so, nothing more Vergilian has yet been recognized in Homer.

The latest publication on this question is by J. Th. Kakrides, who compares ancient and modern versions of the story, and who proposes the term 'neo-analytic' for the method by which scholars now trace the process used by great poets in combining earlier poems and redistributing their elements, for their own new expression. T. W. Allen, F. Shadewaldt, E. Howald, A. Pestalozzi, D. L. Page and J. A. Davison have helped to shew that Homer created his poetry in that way. Meanwhile, the same process had been discovered in Vergil, and called 'integration', some years ago; it was E. K. Rand who suggested that Vergil and Coleridge worked in similar ways. Colin Hardie has now shown that Dante 'integrated' passages of Vergil in new combinations, and Kenneth Muir has proved that Shakespeare himself so treated his sources. It is now possible to trace backwards into the past the sources of the *Iliad*, and, in turn, their sources. For generations the integration of older poetry had been practised. The death of Patroclus in the *Iliad* is based on the death of Achilles himself in an earlier poem. One of Homer's sources was a neatly symmetrical *Memmonid*, in which the battle was between Achilles and Memmonid. The pattern of the *Iliad*, described by J. T. Sheppard and Sir John Myers, is far more elaborate, but not so neatly precise. In Homer, greatness broke through the symmetries of form and fact in which the tales of Memnon and Meleager had been framed. Homer stands at this artistic culmination, as he stands too at the social culmination, in which emotional life, canalized in monogamy, next dangerously overflows. It is not insignificant that Patroclus replaces Cleopatra, and that Achilles, able to face authority neither in himself nor in Agamemnon, relies on his divine mother, herself a sharp inversion of Meleager's mother, for protection.

Homer's imagination, actuated by a vast torrent of reading or of listening, could do its own part. It was by 'a supreme sensitivity to the imponderables of the human spirit, a sensitivity which goes far

beyond the limits of conscious thinking', as Ernst Howald says, that 'Homer made his lies look like truth'. The subtlety of his art has been becoming continually clearer, especially lately through the acute exposition of the late E. T. Owen. He shews how everything in the *Iliad* acts on the percipient emotionally, and exactly right, expanding what has gone before, preparing what is to come, and delivering, at each moment, just the impact which the whole great poem demands. Every reaction to Agamemnon's folly, and even every death dealt by Achilles, is eloquent and indispensable.

All is part of the unitary Homeric world, a world, as Mark Van Doren notes, in which everything is moving and alive, as in no other poet's, a world where everything ripples and quivers, the leaves of Mount Pelion as the waves of the sea and the ranks of standing men. Humanity is still living as an organ of a living world.

Past, present and future are clasped and focussed in Homeric poetry. There is no sign that it will become obsolete. Odysseus, so far from being, as he has been thought, and not only by Vico and Voltaire, morally out of date, offers rescue for many living now, and Achilles, and Hector too, are hard to match for illumination of the permanent facts, which are to-day most urgent. The late Simone Weil, writing according to Herbert Read 'in the accents of genius', maintained that only Homer, and successors entirely dependant on Homer, have presented a moral system simple and true enough to save contemporary humanity. In recent poets the generality must be less and the irrelevances and misleading differentiations more, so that an earlier poet is a more useful guide. The matter is explained by Fernand Robert with great penetration and clarity. As he says, sailors are better trained on sailing ships than on modern ships, and science learnt forty years ago is now very much more out of date than is any of Homer's poetry which was read at the same time.

It is still poetically true that when evening has passed 'the black of night has stolen colour from the world'. Yet in fact more colours are visible in the sky on a dark night than in bright daylight. Perceptions, or the mind's reception of them, have changed or varied. A totality seems to be directly presented in palaeolithic cave-painting and in Shakespearian verse. Homer's verse is formulary, and his descriptive repertory is discrete or fragmentary, like geometric drawings on vases. A statement is built up by adding part to part. There are not enough general words and there are too many particular words, for example, nine nouns for 'strength' and eight verbs for 'see'. Bruno Snell has lately argued this question, and shown how the structure and content of thought and language changed by stages from Homer to Vergil. From the time of Archilochus individuals were conscious of their own souls, and sought a new relation between themselves and the world, perhaps in some observation of a fixed rhythm of life, or in a philosophy of individual or collective history, since the old ritual unity had been lost. Presently the naïve belief in myth was also lost. But Vergil was nevertheless in sharp contrast with the great Greeks

when he consciously used myth for symbolic expression. One of his first innovations was his construction, out of a passage in Polybius, of the mythical poetic Arcadia. Already in the first Eclogue Vergil was doing something very new indeed in his solidly responsible blend of mythic configuration with actualities of his own day. He was also fixing poetry for centuries. Furnishing a continuation of Snell's narrative, Ernest Robert Curtius has proved that the new Vergilian landscape of the first Eclogue became a convention dominant in Romance languages, just as their epic form reached them through Vergil from Homer. But Vergilian myth reaches farther than that. Luigi Alfonsi has profoundly seen that Propertius, with Roman concentration and Roman sense of time, completely altered the mythic resources which he inherited from Hellenistic poets, and made of myth a device for consolidating the present by transmission from the past, for securing the future by a directed will, and for penetrating beyond the veil, all passion burnt away. The Propertian sequence of personal love, patriotic ardour, and mystic vision marks him as one of the great poets. And Vergil trod his way.

Macrobius, as Vernon Rendall recalls, has left the first extant comparison of Vergil and Homer, and his match of phrase with phrase may stand. In addition, the poets are alike as world poets, or epochal poets, who by integrating past poetry distil and condense a vast experience. Both generalize, and focus a resultant. They are not inclined to present single facts actual in one moment of time, whether an actual Troy of history or an actual landscape. Vergil often preferred a conventional and literary description even when he would have described a scene naturalistically, but in this subtle matter, where the exact truth is elusive, the researches of Anna G. de Tollenaer-Blonk and Curtius, must now be set beside the researches of Bernard Rehm and Bertha Tilly. At any rate Vergil carried his generalization so far that in the *Georgics* he integrated an imaginary bird, a 'sea-coot' from Cicero and Aratus. That, and several other examples, are furnished by L. A. S. Jermyn, who can be said to have proved that the *Georgics,* in spite of their practical aspect, are not immune from the Homeric law. A good example in the *Aeneid* is the Sibyl Cumae. J. H. Waszink has proved that Vergil created her out of elements derived from earlier sibyls. There had been no Cumean Sibyl till then, though perhaps a death goddess, such as the Calypso investigated by Herman Güntert, had long been revered near Cumae. Vergil is like Homer in this condensation of reminiscences, poetic or literary, or poetic and literary, into new and intense significations. Sometimes there is a neat inversion, of immense effect. Such is Vergil's use of Lucretian phrases to express the opposite of Lucretian doctrines, observed in particular by Agnes K. Michels, and Vergil's attribution to the High God himself of the advances in civilization which in Hesiod are due to Prometheus, and which offended Zeus, a characteristically Vergilian decision which L. P. Wilkinson has just noted. Enough is known of Homer to justify a claim that here, too, he and

Vergil are alike. Both find such ways to make dynamic and new the long experience which they generalize and condense. Homer lays a claim to the universality which T. H. Haarhoff asserts of Vergil.

It is easy to distinguish too sharply Vergil's Latin from Homer's Greek. Certainly, Vergil's words are burning atoms of inextinguishable thought, but hardly Homer's; and some of them contain the rippling vitality and expansive truth, self-dependent, or in mutual reflection, which in Homer characters may have, but not often, individual words. And for Vergil, as for no poet before, time, in the words of Father E. J. Stormon, S.J., is a constituent part of reality. Vergil's phrases are shot with it, iridescently. Homer on the other hand composed by formulæ inherited from far back in eastern hieratic tradition. The researches of Charles Autran have already proved that Homeric poetry is, ultimately, at least as bilingual as Vergilian. T. S. Eliot's insight is justified for both; and a way is opened for a new analysis of Homeric language, evolved, like Vergil's, under stress of forcing significance out of inadequate verbal forms. Nor is it clear that Greek epic style is in all senses very much more formulary than Latin. Latin poetic styles are formulary, too, and so is modern English. For example in the broadcast report of the Budget in 1947, almost everything was expressed by what could well be called formulæ. Perhaps Vergil did what Homer did, but for a different mental world. Homer reconciled ancient wisdom with the beginning of analytical European thought and sentience. Vergil's reconciliation extended farther than can yet be said.

Homer had the immense problem of building incidents in contrast and balance to reach his human revelation. Vergil's mature art was not limited to that. He had learnt from Greek epic the two great lessons of construction by integration of earlier poetry in new, bold combinations, and of right balance in dualities which would be the better if not exactly symmetrical. The first lesson Vergil applied not only to stories and characters, but to everything else also, including the internal intricacies of words, and minute complexities of thought. The second lesson, so like St. Augustine's belief that even balance and equality, especially if not quite exact, are the most divine of earthly merits, has been illuminated after long obscurity by R. W. Cruttwell in a work of great intellectual power. The *Aeneid* is constructed in an elaborate symbolic language, which interwines comparisons to sustain heavy charges of significance. By this method Vergil superimposed contemporary on earlier Roman history, and the whole conception of Rome on the conception of Troy. A suggestive phrase may reveal an expressive equation. Vergil's 'ancient mound of Ceres' is adapted from Homer's queer reference to the 'barrow of Myrine' or 'Batieia'. Now Dardanus is central in the scheme of the *Aeneid*; and Dardanus was reported to have been descended from Zeus and Batieia, and conceived, like Sita, in a furrow of the field. Dardanus was for Vergil the link between Troy and Italy; and his name contains as an

element an old word meaning 'bee'. He, therefore, is recalled by the portent of the bees swarming in the citadel of Latinus.

> The Etruscan-Roman contacts of Aeneas, as lineal heir of Dardanus to the cult of Vesta, result in the *Aeneid* directly from his Cretan-Trojan contacts as Teucer's lineal heir to the cult of Cybele. Vergil applies the same terms both to the Trojan contacts of the Etruscan Dardanus, and to the Etruscan contacts of the Trojan Aeneas.

In the prophetic welcome of Tiberinus, the 'Etruscan Tiber', Aeneas is seen as equivalent to a returning Dardanus, who brings back with him once more from Phrygia an originally Etruscan 'Troy Town'. Of the enormous significance, in facts beginning to emerge, and in their poetic resonance, of the Etruscan and Asiatic past of Rome, it is once more, for Charles Autran to speak.

In this method Vergil exploited according to his own invention the Homeric power of condensed suggestion. Vergil exploited the simile comparably. W. Elmslie Philip has shewn that he used similes to regulate his material, to bring out contrasts of character and situation, and to emphasize the human and emotional qualities concerning which, in the narrative, Vergil is more reticent than Homer. The similes are knit with the context, and simile is linked with simile, until at the end of the *Aeneid* they are massed in full power. There is a strange parallel with Homer. The direct content of the *Georgics* gives material for similies in the *Iliad*, according to the observation of A. Severyns. Vergil does not forget Homer for long.

Perhaps Homer gives all that mankind should need, but it was left to Vergil to give much that mankind does in fact need. Vergil reaches, as Homer does not, into the organization and the complexities of the later and the modern world. He thought through politics to mystic perception, and passed beyond pure epic tragedy. Perhaps he could succeed because he also reached farther back in time than Homer. He remembers the old Ægean world and its oriental pre-history more clearly, and often he restores something which in Homer is a broken tale. A safe and sufficient example is provided by the city-sanctities at Troy; on such matters it is proper to wait until evidence is arrayed for a full statement, but fragments of support are always occurring. Vergil's emphasis on Buthrotum, where as Leaf humorously noted he made no attempt at topographical accuracy, fits the distant truth concerning the passage of the Philistines indicated by Giuliano Bonfante. John Garstang has reported from Syria a Hittite statue of the eigtheenth century B.C. with a face of stern, responsible lineaments, representing some governor, clearly a man under authority living as by law of European duty. Such a man is not Homeric. He is Vergilian. But most important is Vergil's progress towards the Divine. For him the human is not enough. Vergil won the conviction that, in words used by Father E. Watts 'God is not niggardly in his revelations' and that 'in every moment is an eternity'. Or perhaps that is to misunderstand Homer. At least Alexander Pope was right to say, with a Vergilian depth of meaning yet to be explored, that Vergil found that

'Homer and nature were the same'. Only Vergil did discover, as the late Theodor Haecker said, and indeed discovered in reaching back to old Egypt and reaching forwards too, that the centre for European man is the family, which is a Holy family, Homeric but also Divine.

WILLIAM GERHARDI

Novelist of the Poetic Present

S. GORLEY PUTT

I

THERE are a few of us who, when we meet and talk about contemporary novels, almost always come round to the subject of William Gerhardi; and after we have reminded one another (almost like Proust-lovers and James-fanciers) of this scene and that joke and the other little touch of sad poetry, we then end up with our perennial wonder: 'Why isn't Gerhardi a more popular novelist? Why don't the library-subscribers find him much funnier than X? Why do the critics not find his style more attractive than that of Y? Why is he not acclaimed as in every way superior to that trickster Z?' We shake our heads in real puzzlement, and estimate the date when the Gerhardi boom will set in and our long-held shares be realizable at top prices. Meanwhile, we comfort ourselves with the knowledge that he has never for a moment been in any doubt about his own qualities. When a friend asked Mr. Gerhardi, in the course of a conversation about the cinema, what great novel should be the next to be filmed, he replied affably, brightly, seriously, and without one instant's hesitation: '*Of Mortal Love*!'

Mr. Gerhardi is a peculiarly difficult writer to introduce. I hope to show in this essay that he is an original novelist and stands in a one-man category in modern English fiction. The writers to whom he has been most indebted, Chehov and Proust, are themselves foreign to the main stream of English novels. This originality would be a useful starting-point for an appraisal of his Collected Uniform Revised Edition[1], were it not for the fact that his entire output is an expression of this highly original standpoint, so that in order to illustrate it

[1] This Collected Uniform Revised Edition is published by Macdonalds. The following titles have so far appeared: *Futility, My Sinful Earth* and *The Polyglots* (6s. each); *Of Mortal Love, Resurrection, Anton Chekov, Pending Heaven* and *The Memoirs of Satan* (7s. 6d. each): the next two for publication are *My Wife's the Least Of It* and *Memoirs of a Polyglot*. A few sentences incorporated in this present essay first appeared in a review in *Time and Tide*.

adequately it would be necessary to quote not sentences but whole chapters. At this point I can adduce Mr. Gerhardi as witness. During the course of a lecture tour in Sweden, I gave one or two talks on the English novel and spoke of *The Polyglots* and *Of Mortal Love,* with suitable quotations. On my return I telephoned Mr. Gerhardi and told him of my talks. (For although he is now almost an Invisible Man, he is prepared to talk exuberantly, and at great length, on the telephone.) He wished to know which passages I had quoted. I told him: the sea-burial of Natasha from *The Polyglots,* some love scenes from *Of Mortal Love,* and the death of Dinah in the same novel. He listened patiently. 'Yes, yes; but what about Aunt Teresa? And that scene on the next page where . . .' Before I rang off I had to explain that my fifty-minute lecture had been on the English novel in general and not on Mr. Gerhardi's works in particular. He thought this a mistake.

Another difficulty in introducing this writer is that he has already, to those willing to listen, adequately introduced himself. As novelist, critic and telephonist he is of a piece: self-expository, irrepressible, propounding with serious exuberance a comic view of life, and of himself. He is not (though his early critics praised him for being one) a satirist. 'I am serious', he writes, 'but not earnest; humour, I need hardly say, being the most serious quality in literature.' And again: 'Critics feel uneasy when a writer is not solemn. Who is he laughing *at?* who *with?* Warily they trot out the stupid word "satire", or the silliest word of all "sophistication".'

In *Memoirs of a Polyglot* (1931), one of the most entertaining autobiographies of the times, Mr. Gerhardi has shown how his long determination to be a writer was fostered by a childhood spent in pre-Revolutionary Russia and by his bizarre adventures during and after the 1914-18 war. At that time he could hardly complain of lack of attention. His early books had been acclaimed and his impudent association with Lord Beaverbrook brought him to the notice of the social and literary lion-hunters of the 1920's. As for his literary views, he has set them forth with an exasperated candour in the general Introduction (1947) to his Collected Edition, printed as a preface to *Futility.* It is here that he takes occasion to deliver some deft, graceful smacks at the book-reviewers. And so, with an almost shy directness, Mr. Gerhardi has told the truth about himself as a man and as an artist. Perhaps because it is so difficult to bracket him with other writers, so impossible to recruit him to a 'school' or probe him as an 'influence', his novels have given pleasure to individual readers without earning for him any recognized place among the writers of popular fiction.

Candour and tenderness are the guardian angels of this novelist (and a kind of frivolity is, I suppose, his attendant imp). At its best, his humorous writing is so candid and so tender that we accept all the implied poetry without recognizing its rare value. It looks so easy. It is, in fact, the result of an unusual literary tact. His best prose has

the humility of works of art; it does not point or gesticulate, still less does it display a label. His characters can remain candid and tender in situations where they figure as unheroic, ridiculous and sometimes shamelessly self-seeking. For them, there is always a sense of wonder in the immediate present. Their creator has stripped them of pretence and decked them in no borrowed finery; yet he has a poet's, and not a satirist's, eye; his judgment is that of an artist, not a moralist. The best pages of *The Polyglots* and *Of Mortal Love* are the products of a poetic sensibility, wary, humorous, yet in love with the present.

'I stand before you naked and unashamed—yes, *quite* unashamed', Mr. Gerhardi seems to say in all his books. 'I have even been driven to the inartistic expedient of pointing out just where you should laugh, and where you should draw a gentle metaphysical sigh. It is strange that you should still not understand.' In a way, it *is* strange. For Mr. Gerhardi's poetic 'criticism of life' can be subtle and heart-searching. He is a writer of direct and sensuous simplicity who can, in the course of a few pages, make his readers laugh aloud and sigh over the gentle cruelties of life. This simplicity may deceive the pretentious reader but it ought to have warmed the heart of that ultimate arbiter, the Common Reader. For it is his peculiar gift that he can cheer us with a smile of kinship even when his characters are downcast by their own folly, and sharpen our awareness, in the midst of sudden pleasures (listening to the voices of children, say, or feeling the warmth of a summer evening), of the underlying mystery of life. He can be as funny as Charlie Chaplin, and his place among his contemporaries is about as odd as Chaplin's would be if his films had been secretly enjoyed by small Cinema Societies and never shown in the local Odeons and Empires.

Yet when all this has been said, there remain reasons for the failure of Mr. Gerhardi's works to secure for him the place for which his artistic equipment would seem to give him title. The essence of his originality and the reason why he has not made a more decisive impact on the contemporary novel are one and the same: he cannot see that he is in any way different from other people. Thus, for example, his undeniable lack of interest in ordinary narrative construction is, to him, a virtue: he simply believes that other writers have failed to shake themselves quite free from what he calls 'evil suspense'. It is as if a giant panda, enjoying its own tricks and conscious of the admiration of the nearest audience, were not only unaware of its own unlikeness to most other animals, but were prepared to claim, when this hard truth was pointed out, that elephants and tigers were Nature's imperfect attempts to create the panda, and were miserably conscious of their own poor progress along the evolutionary road towards panda-hood

Thus has come about the sad, faintly comic—indeed Gerhardi-like—predicament: a master of one neglected vein in English fiction has remained unappreciated largely because he himself thinks this vein to be not only the most valuable source of literature but the *sole*

source, so that he has repeatedly brought to the surface another small pile of nuggets, just like all the other piles of offerings he has already made to a world too preoccupied to recognize the quality of this rare, semi-precious and not very useful ore. He has repeated his characters, his jokes, his frail amusing cosmic observations, and if you happen to enjoy that particular line of goods you will not complain. Meanwhile the novelist himself, increasingly baffled by the non-convertibility of his own currency, can never see that gross men and women mainly visit the fiction market for some quite different commodity, and have to be submitted to a far more thorough course of 'sales conditioning' than he is ever prepared to give them.

One feels that Mr. Gerhardi has a quick insight into the human heart and an innocent relish in unveiling his own, but that he probably does not read the newspaper regularly and has only a rudimentary notion of what busy people do when they are not just being sad, or jealous, or gay. This child-like wide-eyed irrelevance can become an irritation. It has probably lost him many otherwise sympathetic readers. It will have lost him all the staid readers. His heroes have an attitude to women at once affectionate and predatory, and their shamelessness is so obtrusively unrebuked that many women readers must find his sense of humour hard to share. When his characters are childlike their perceptions are clear and delightful, but at other times his heroes become childish and say, in effect, 'Look at me!' When this happens, some readers will want to reply 'Stop it!' or 'Don't you know there's a war on?' or 'I have work to do', or give vent to similar expressions of moral superiority. At such times the Gerhardi humour, divested of its tenderness, can become facetious and over-extravagant. As for the author, he will say, with his narrator of *The Polyglots:* 'Now this sort of thing puzzles me. What am I to make of it?'

II

> One of the chief delights of reading Chehov is the discovery that our vaguely apprehended, half-suspected thoughts concerning the fluidness, complexity and elusiveness of life have been confirmed articulately and in print.
>
> And it is because there is in Chehov's works that fluid undercurrent by which we recognize existence, because we see that he at least did not simplify life in order to round off his picture (the loose-end nature of it being just the picture he has set out to portray), and because in a complex version there are necessarily more points of affinity than in a simplified and stripped account of human life, that we recognize ourselves in mental and emotional experiences in point of fact unknown to us.

These quotations from the biographical and critical study *Anton Chehov* (1923) prompt me to explain that when I claim originality for Mr. Gerhardi's novels I do not suggest that his subject-matter is startlingly new, nor even that his attitude to life is historically unparalleled. His novels are original in the sense that his recognizable models, Chehov and Proust, evidently gave him confidence to explore

and expound a view of life native to himself and not hitherto specifically expressed in English fiction. *Futility* (1922) and *The Polyglots* (1925) were published at a time when the English novel was being subjected to a number of experiments, some of which have extended the scope of subsequent writers and some of which have caused ordinary readers to turn in despair to detective stories and esoteric critics to proclaim with ecstatic relief the death of the novel as we know it. It is to Mr. Gerhardi's great credit that, equipped as he was with sufficient cleverness to join or even lead one of the fashionable 'satirical' or 'precious moment' or 'symbolic' groups for which the descriptive terms *avant-garde* and *vieux jeux* are simply a matter of rapid chronology, he steadfastly developed his comic-poetic apprehension of our 'spirituaul riches subsisting under the surface of Time'. Irreverent to the point of frivolity, he refused to see in human relationships much more than the alternating sorrows and jests of 'tender sympathy deepened by humorous discernment'. A quarter of a century later, he remains impenitent:

> The more deeply rooted in life, the more steeped in humorous tragedy . . . the more serious in a real sense will be the work of the heavenly forces released in implication. And the more high-falutin' the subject, the more grandiloquent the manner and dead-earnest the aim, the more nebulous, windy, dogmatic, flat, inaccurate, woolly, lifeless, trivial, shallow and worthless will be the result: because the writer has seen fit to use his own foolish tongue to state that which a wiser man would have left implied.

In all of which, whether in 1922 or in 1947, the debt to Chehov and the sturdy independence are about equally balanced.

Futility was published when the author was twenty-six. Fresh, candid, impudent, it showed already almost all the Gerhardi characteristics—which may be a way of saying either that he has been true to his genius or that he has never developed. (On this point, as on all others concerning himself, Mr. Gerhardi spoke early and has not retracted. In the short story *A Bad End*, published in 1926, he has a writer of whom the critics say, alternately, 'one wishes that the author would break new ground, express life from a new angle', and 'get you back to the simple delights of your earlier books and we will listen to you till the crack of doom'.) Here for the first time he introduces his readers, in a spirit of resigned comedy, to 'the prevailing Russian atmosphere—chronic uncertainty'. Here are the thin trickles of Gerhardi dialogue, deceptively simple; the repeated use of catch-phrases ('Ach! Andrei Andreivich') to animate a caricature, as it were, through the aural sense; the influence of Chehov (Uncle Kostia is unashamed pilfering); the incidental felicities of phrasing whether of passing comments on life ('that stupid scepticism that comes from too much happiness') or his own miscalculations ('My passionate explanations of my own aloofness began to anger her').

Futility light-heartedly displays domestic chaos against a larger political chaos viewed with equal shoulder-shrugging indifference. Nikolai Bursanov, whose wife refuses to divorce him, lives with Fanny

Ivanovna who mothers his three daughters Sonia, Nina and Vera. The arrival of the narrator, the Gerhardi-figure who philanders with the daughters, coincides with Nikolai's discovery that he himself, already owning one absent legal wife and one all-present and highly respectable mistress, desires to marry Zina, a girl of seventeen. The young narrator views this tangle in a spirit of sympathetic non-interference and with an eye to the main chance:

> I wrote down their names in two columns. Then I perceived that the two columns did not serve my purpose; so I drew arrows and circles round the names and endeavoured to arrange them in sets and groups according to my own ideas of how they should be mated. I began with mating Nina with myself. This was easy enough: it was obvious.

Into this feckless turmoil are flung other farcical ingredients: the financial unsoundness of Nikolai's Siberian gold-mines, the family of Zina who swell the list of the dependents of this gallant impecunious *paterfamilias,* and finally—for they are treated simply as farcical adjuncts—the changing fortunes of the Russian Revolution and the Allied Intervention. The families wait, observing the Vladivostock weather and talking of life and death like characters from a Chehov play. The narrator is vain, serious, and watchful: '"How awfully funnily your mouth moves when you speak", said Nina, who had been listening to me attentively.' At length Nikolai with all his dependents ('We are inseparable—financially') board a train and their tangled hopes and fears are submitted to the scrutiny and resourcefulness of other passengers, such as the English Admiral who 'combines the manner of Napoleon I with the mind of Napoleon III' and Sir Hugo with his 'masterly grasp of the essential'. Outside, the winter misery of Siberia, the fighting and the confusion; inside, the maddening re-examination of hopeless causes and the dizzy disequilibrium of true actions and false attitudes, so that Nikolai can be humble in his generosity and Uncle Kostia arrogant in his dependence:

> 'Remember, we are all behind you; we shall follow you, if need be, to the end of the earth. Courage, Nikolai Vasilievich! Keep hard at it! Keep hard at it!'

In all this, then, there is little room for moralizing. Yet a curious and tender truthfulness flickers across these mad inconsequent pages, a truthfulness sometimes voiced by the narrator in sudden wide-eyed seriousness ('Perhaps there is nothing that brings home so clearly the conviction of the temporary nature of things as the sight of a dead body'), but somehow more illuminating when it lights up for a moment the comic sorrows and pathetic joys of life when people act not as they *should* act or as we would prefer them to act, but with self-absorbed irrelevance:

> 'I chuck Oxford, come all the way to Vladivostock, spend three months on the journey because—because I love you, and you—'
> 'You have a speck of soot on your nose,' she remarked.
> 'Nina!' I cried laughing, my heart all weeping tears. 'Nina!'

The Polyglots, like *Futility,* stems from the author's family ties in

Russia and his unmartial duties as liaison officer during the muddled period of Intervention. Again the domestic scene and the outside world are chaotic, and again the freshness of communication is the result of the narrator's single-minded concentration on his own comfort, modified by a lively curiosity about the behaviour (never, significantly, the motives) of his friends, all viewed in the spirit of comedy even when their predicament, like his own, verges on tragedy. There is another set of Gerhardi characters: Uncle Emmanuel Vanderflint with his catch-phrases ('*Que voulez vous? Courage, courage!*'); Aunt Teresa, 'the incarnation of delicate health', a more flippant version of Proust's Tante Léonie; and, in the Nina role, the sixteen-year-old cousin Sylvia Ninon. The narrator is again unashamedly vain, his eyes for ever turning to the looking-glass, and again he pursues the young girl with an almost infantile and uncomplicated directness, much like one of the Marx Brothers loping off after a passing wench. The narrator's love is serious enough; he suffers jealousy and pique like the most romantic heroes. But he refuses to be solemn about it:

> While I read aloud, Sylvia 'prepared' an expression of wonderment on her face, to show that she was sensitive to what I read. But she began to fret as I read on, absorbed . . .
>
> There is something soft about my nose and mouth, like a rabbit's. I forget whether I told you I'm good-looking? Sleek black hair brushed back from the forehead—and all the rest of it.
>
> 'You're so clever—and yet you're nothing much to look at,' she said. This, I must confess, astonished me. I have no shallow vanity—but this astonished me. Sleek black hair and all that sort of thing. It astonished me.
>
> 'Never mind, darling. I don't like handsome men,' she added. Now this sort of thing puzzles me. What am I to make of it?

Mr. Gerhardi was at once, we feel, too lazy to think out his psychological problems to a solution, and too honest to strike poses and invent a bogus apparatus of attitudes to explain emotions he never felt. A novelist who employs this latter method only too often mimics emotions that neither he nor anybody else has ever felt. The author of *The Polyglots* can be maddeningly frivolous in his habit of switching from 'major' to 'minor' matters, but although one can be aghast at his irreverence, one is never embarrassed, in his company, by a disregard for truth. Doubtless, it is this *gamin* irreverence that has caused him to be esteemed a cynic, a satirist. 'Who is he laughing *at?* Who *with?*' But he is no more a satirist than the child in Hans Andersen's tale who observed, without malice or intent to improve the social scene by ridicule, 'But the Emperor *has* no clothes!' The nearest he comes to social indignation is when his narrator chides Aunt Teresa for wanting wars 'conducted in good taste, outside in the yard, but please not on the drawing-room carpet!'—and suggests that 'soldiers should begin at home with the civilian population, particularly with the old ladies'. There is no rancour, nor is there a sense of high-minded outrage. We feel that the narrator is thinking only of himself as being, technically at least, a soldier who, as wars were then conducted, was in greater danger than his aunt. Yet this

cowardly common-sense is less unattractive than the false heroics of the aunt who would whip other people towards gallant death. And similarly, the narrator's lecture to his aunt about worry, 'the failure to control imagination', is eminently sensible, unheroic, unsentimental, childish.

At the end of the novel, the moving description of a child's burial at sea is followed by a mood not of theatrical grief but of a far more piercing 'acute resignation' which is only an intensification of the same mood in which are observed the antics of children, the helpless folly of Major Beastly with his 'What *I* always say is: one man's as good as another and a damned sight better!' and the unconscious beauty of the tropical sea. Here is the passage:

> Once more we looked back at the sea, and went down to breakfast. But the table where the girl with the sea-green eyes had sat showed empty, and we avoided looking at it as we ate. They talked of a mishap to one of the boilers, of the ensuing delay in our voyage, and that we might have to drift to Bombay to replenish our vanishing coal supply; but I did not care whither we steamed or whither we drifted, and if we were destined to drift for the rest of our lives and never reach England, or stop drifting, or drift straight into hell, it was to me, in my mood of acute resignation, a matter of welcome indifference. After breakfast Aunt Molly came out on deck with a bottle and tablespoon, and gave Nora her codliver oil. Perhaps the burial had wrecked her nerves a little, but she said impatiently, 'Get on, Nora, don't waste half an hour over it.'
>
> '*Wait*—but I like to *taste* it,' Nora pleaded, as she licked the spoon.
>
> 'Now go and fetch Harry.'
>
> 'Harry: your wi*me*!' came Nora's voice as she ran off down the slippery deck.

If the manner was learnt from Chehov, the master had done no more than encourage the pupil to describe life as he himself, without prompting, saw it and felt it.

III

Before he was thirty, then, Mr. Gerhardi had published a short critical study which is one of the most sensitive interpretations of the creative processes of a major artist, and a couple of novels expressing his view (later defined in the Letter to a Reader forming a preface to *My Wife's the Least of It*) that 'humour does not express hate, but a clairvoyant view of the maladjustments of our life which, like a traffic block from one end of Oxford Street to another, can best be dispersed, not by shouting and shoving, but by recourse to an autogyro for a just appreciation of the situation'. There were no doubt readers who, exasperated by his refusal to identify himself with a faction, could find 'nothing *in* his books'. To them, too, he has given an answer (in the same letter):

> The romantic writer identifies himself with a faction of sinful humanity which he whitewashes, to make it stand out in relief against a background of other factions, which he unavoidably colours. If the classic tradition means anything, it means the suspension of sentence till the Day of Judgment and an underlying gaiety of spirit rooted in our irrepressible belief in the divine balance of things.

Alas, during the next decade he failed to practise as well as he had preached, or has preached and practised again since. In *Pretty Creatures* (1927) he collected his short stories, amusing pieces of which all that need be said in a general survey of his work is that they sometimes betray a disquieting impression of Sterne-like impotence, not indeed absent from the novels, but here made more apparent by the shorter form. Yet the better flavour prevails. A year later came *Jazz and Jasper* (rechristened *My Sinful Earth* in the new edition), introducing Lord Ottercove and—to my mind disastrously—a taste for fantasy. *The Memoirs of Satan* (1932), written in collaboration with Brian Lunn, is another essay in the fantastic. It is sad to have to record these lapses (for having been converted by Mr. Gerhardi's own descriptions of his own aims, I can find no kinder words for these efforts in a different and wholly inferior *genre*); sadder still to note that they alone, of all his works, have either exerted influence on other writers or were passing experiments in a vein of mechanical satire only too prevalent elsewhere.

The fall from grace can be forgiven in the light of Mr. Gerhardi's later return to what he would call his own genius—and particularly in the light of *Of Mortal Love*, which would redeem almost anything. For it is clear that in concentrating his interest (I quote from the General Introduction) on 'that residuum of happiness, barely noticed in the stress of living, perhaps best defined as the poetry of life', and expressing his belief that 'the novel, the newest, the most fluid, plastic, malleable and commodious of the arts, is the rightful heir of the poem', the author had sacrificed everything to sensibility, candour and a wonderful flair for atmosphere. In *Jazz and Jasper* he first tossed these assets aside. The result is a chaos of clever high spirits; a concoction of caricature, snippets of satire, and at times an excruciating facetiousness. This book, and to a lesser extent *The Memoirs of Satan*, was more modish, more 'wickedly' funny than its predecessors. I hazard the conjecture that it represents the author's attempt to obtain recognition in a more readily identifiable field.

Midway between *Jazz and Jasper* and *The Memoirs of Satan* came *Pending Heaven* (1930). It is as 'shocking' as the one and as 'original' as the other, but it recaptures the impudent tenderness of *Futility* and *The Polyglots*, and with it the authentic Gerhardi note. Max Fisher, an amiable buccaneer of hearts, ambles through the plot collecting lovers and failing to discard old ones, so that he ends up like an unsuccessful player of rummy. A London *vie à trois* swells to a Saharan *vie à six*, and there are a couple of enchanting exasperating Gerhardi children. It is a light, frivolous and highly entertaining novel, irrational in all conscience, but never self-consciously or 'wickedly' so; the impudence is once more a matter of candour, not of striking clever and in the end boring poses. And in this gay pavilion there are, now and again, those clear panes through which can be seen the white radiance, if not of eternity, then of the inescapable human predicament—'a revelation', to quote the General Introduction again, 'of our

common being moved to obey the unknown laws of the kingdom of heaven within us'. Here is one such passing comment:

> This depending entirely on his love, this devotion to him, disconcerted him. It was as if his soul were a room and somebody was looking into it, but he was standing there looking out through another window.

The next novel was *Resurrection* (1934). It is a long book, with rather more narrative vigour than Mr. Gerhardi had hitherto troubled to put forth. It can be read and enjoyed for different reasons by different kinds of reader. There is an 'astral body' theme leading to discussions on immortality: we are assured by the author that this experience, complete with a tape of light connecting, like an umbilical cord, the sleeping body and its floating, luminous and sentient counterpart, was genuine. I am inclined to believe the formal protestation, if only because Mr. Gerhardi has always been at his best when telling the truth about his own life as he has lived it, and at his weakest when caprice or experiment led him to be 'inventive' as well as imaginative. But what is more interesting, in this uneven but accomplished novel, is the technical skill of a very high order that enabled the author to introduce so esoteric an experience into the world of social comedy—to subdue, this time, an element dangerously irrelevant to his own special mode of amused tolerant observation.

The narrator has his first gingerly astral flight shortly before attending a debutante ball. However much he may protest (as indeed he does) at the incredulity of his fellow-guests when he comes to them all aglow with intimations of immortality, the scene of his disappointment, as his friends in turn show themselves unwilling to pursue so frivolous a topic on so important a social occasion, or else treat his confidences as an excuse for exchanging tales of psychic experiences they themselves have had or heard about—this scene is itself one in which Mr. Gerhardi's peculiar virtues as a novelist have full play. We are the more persuaded of the truth of the poor narrator's story as we are made the more certain of the equal truth that no man's experiences, however revealing, are likely to be of much interest to his fellow-men when they themselves are wrapped up in the small affairs of the moment.

Meanwhile, the 'straight' description shows the author at his best. There are passages in the early chapters that recall the happier observations of Proust at a Guermantes reception—though here again, as earlier with Chehov, one feels glad to be reminded that Proust too was a great *comic* writer, and that a partial similarity of temperament should have guided Mr. Gerhardi to so apt a model. One lengthy paragraph must serve to illustrate the fortunate influence of Proust's vivid, flowing, and image-decked narrative sweep:

> Suddenly a fat old butler in knee-breeches ran across the whole length of the ballroom with a preoccupied air on his face, stopping the band and automatically as the music stopped clearing a centre path all the length of the ballroom. There appeared, as if to justify the working of cause and effect, though, as in the case of other natural phenomena,

> such as thunder and lightning, we had seen the effect before the cause —there appeared on the threshold a royal pair. Indeed, there appeared two couples walking through the opening thus made for them: the host leading the royal lady, followed by the royal spouse with the hostess on his arm. The transformation of the scene was instantaneous. The host who, despite his white gloves, had been a man among men, suddenly looked like his own lackey. A strange expression came on his face—a sugary one, as if he were anxious to register that he was sensible of the honour, and one of stiffened alarm, as if he would stand no affront from the crowd through which he was leading his precious visitors. The guests, who had a moment before danced light-heartedly, drew themselves up a little stiffly and awkwardly, because stiffness does not come naturally to the free-born Briton. The ladies, conscious of the womanly grace of submission and, moreover, eager to parade their training which marked them as having been presented at Court, curtsied with ready grace as the royal guests, with that trained eye of theirs for recognizing a face, quickly spotted a few for special greeting as they moved on. Then, as suddenly as the music had stopped, it resumed, the sea which had parted for the passage of Moses rushed together once more, the dancing continued, and so excellent and discreet are English manners that no one betrayed even by a look the slightest interest in the royal pair, whose advent had caused such commotion, and who were now lost in the dancing crowd.

It vexes Mr. Gerhardi and his immediate admirers when the astral body theme of *Resurrection* is not taken seriously. I do take it seriously. There are, after all, plenty of parallel experiences, from the Flying Carpet of The Arabian Nights to the more technical disquisitions of J. W. Dunne. Nor can I ever accept the charge of 'Incredible!' on the score of immortality and the various types of Other Worlds, except from those (and I have never yet met them) who consider our own 'normal' life to be unmysterious. Yet when all this has been said I maintain that Mr. Gerhardi is less good as a prophet than as a humorist. I have had the advantage of hearing him expound his astral experiences to a group of eager listeners, and it was interesting to note, then as in reading the novel, that one's chief entertainment was not in the story but in the ill-concealed impatience of most of the company to express either a brusque fake cynicism or a competitive list of bigger and better astral flights. A man with Mr. Gerhardi's gift of social comedy could be entertaining with a less original theme; a narrator not thus endowed could be a bore though he himself rose from the dead.

IV

Here is Mr. Gerhardi's own description of his finest novel, *Of Mortal Love* (1936): 'a novel containing fresh love-lore and treating of the succeeding stages of transmutation of love erotic into love imaginative; of love entrancing into love unselfish; of love tender into love transfigured.' In it is concentrated all the qualities I most enjoy in his writing, and from it he has excluded the faults I myself find in some of his other works. Lord Ottercove is rescued from the world of *My Sinful Earth* and reappears in fiction with the winning vitality of Lord Beaverbrook in *Memoirs of a Polyglot*. Dinah, recipient of the

various loves described above, is the most engaging and life-like of all the 'silly, enchanting girls, rootless and wayward' (to quote from an appreciation of this novel by C. P. Snow) who people the Gerhardi world. Walter, feckless, sensitive, self-centred and passionate, is more solid than the preceding Gerhardi-like heroes but never hardens to an attitudinizing lay figure. And here, more than anywhere else, the fun and the poetry of life combine in a smile now mysteriously sad, now outrageously high-spirited. This book, as the author himself so rightly insists, calls aloud for long quotation. There are snippets enough to display most of the Gerhardi moods, and the title of the Third Part of the novel, 'The Tender Friends', sums up pretty well the half-shy half-sensuous quality of his 'love lore'.

Here, then, in Walter, is the hero unheroic:

> He rarely, if ever, returned hospitality. He considered that by accepting he had already given up of himself, of his energy, of his time, of his appetite, to requite the debt. With casual dinner companions he would throw himself into conversation with a devotion, a whole-heartedness, which exhausted him. Had he been invited to dine out by himself he would have enjoyed concentrating on the food and the wine. But what pleasure was there in ordering haphazardly from a bewildering list of courses a chicken which he had to eat while conscientiously talking, risking every minute to swallow a bone, or leaving the chicken while dutifully dancing with some woman not in her first youth? Nor did he lightly accept an invitation to dinner, weighing carefully the probable quality of the food against his own intellectual expenditure and delaying his reply to the last. 'Mr. Walter Smith,' he wrote, 'thanks Lady de Jones for her kind invitation but is unable to come to a decision as the arguments for and against appear to him overwhelming.' Latterly he rarely accepted invitations at all unless allowed to bring several of his friends, whose atmosphere, he urged and argued, was indispensible for his well-being, but to whom in reality he was returning hospitality at the expense of his host.

Here is Dinah, plying busily between lover and husband:

> When Dinah came home in the early hours of the morning Jim was usually fast asleep. He asked few questions. If he did ask—he emphasized that it was a point of interest—what she had been doing the night before, she said she had been meeting interesting people in Walter's flat, and she quickly added, 'Walter says—' and transmitted some mystical reference to music that Walter had made, to which she had been too bored to listen in her presence, but that now clearly came back to her. Jim, very interested, contributed to it out of his well-stored knowledge, so that Dinah next day was greeting Walter gaily with, 'Oh yes, Jim says—'. Such messages were taken backwards and forwards by Dinah who, though she took no interest in them, transmitted them with an accuracy born of sheer zest in transmission.

I am not sure that Dinah's oft-repeated line 'Oh, darling, I do love you because you are so funny' does not represent at its simplest Mr. Gerhardi's view of love and of comedy. The absurd characters from earlier novels reappear (Bonzo and Aunt Minnie and the others) either under the same names or thinly disguised: Mr. Gerhardi certainly loves his own characters too well ever to tire of them. And with the absurdity goes the poetry of life, with the meanness goes the resignation to sorrow and to beauty. After Dinah's death, Walter recalls their ludicrous appearance at a Ball:

> But when they got there, there was only a buffet with sandwiches, no champagne or wine, only coffee and tea and lemonade, and the party was commonplace and dull in the extreme—not a face you had ever seen anywhere before. They were back almost as soon as they had started and she sat down in the dress it had taken her three weeks to make, and cried. And now that she was dead he thought of that dinner he had not given her and it was as if she had died hungry. He saw her lying on her dark-blue divan in a sort of daze, trying to understand why her life was unhappy, why there were so many nights in her life when the one man she wanted to be with did not want her, and how to step into that other life where you loved and were loved, every sensible woman's life, which was happy. His gathering distress was hovering over some rising lamentation which, could they brush wings, would speak to him, say what it was. She had died with too much life in her: it was this, this.

Mr. Gerhardi's latest novel, *My Wife's The Least Of It* (1938), comes nearest to expressing, with rueful patience, his own bemusement at his status in the critical lists of English novelists. The grotesque hopes and dismal downfalls of poor Mr. Baldridge as he tries to sell his film scripts reflect, in their very tone of farce, this novelist's sturdy belief in himself. There is no space for a full review of this hilarious (and rather too long) 'criticism of life', but on the pegs of a happily revived Aunt Minnie and the Gerhardi-like Mr. Baldridge I will hang a further note on this author's comic sense.

Aunt Minnie, one of a gay party who sat on Captain Devonshire's balcony to watch the Coronation procession, is treated as a figure of fun. But she is not made inhumanly comic like, to take an obvious instance, the more popular butts of Evelyn Waugh's wit. Resisting the snigger, Mr. Gerhardi has been true to his own precepts: 'The notion that the humorist is malevolent has always struck me as comic. One might as soon eat one's dinner with contempt, or listen to music in indignation, as laugh maliciously'—and again: 'You cannot have a penetrating and impartially charitable representation of human, and therefore sinful, beings except in terms of humour.' The alteration of 'charitable' to 'uncharitable' and 'humour' to 'malice' would describe only too accurately the kind of humour (*not* satire, which is quite another matter) now in vogue. Aunt Minnie is ridiculous enough, *in* herself, perched on the balcony. I cannot but feel that Mr. Waugh, to make her funny, would have put a parrot on her shoulder or dropped her off the balcony. I am sure that other more recent humorists, seeking to outdo Mr. Waugh in hilarity, would have caused the parrot to *push* her off the balcony. Perhaps this is only to say that Mr. Gerhardi's more gentle sense of humour, nurtured on the Russian novelists, is nevertheless well within the older English tradition and has shown no sign of adjusting itself to more grisly fun.

The plight of Mr. Baldridge, baffled by the enthusiastic indifference of the film moguls to the fate of his scripts, might seem too close a parallel to Mr. Gerhardi's own case, if it were not for the presence throughout the novel of other exasperating, and funnier, instances of the bemusement of Innocence in Society. The innocent at large is not always, of course, as innocent as Mr. Gerhardi would have us suppose:

there is a repeated note of special pleading in many of the passages in which he claims for his Gerhardi-like characters a remission of the dues normally exacted by society. 'There is no measuring rod for genius', he seems to be saying over and over again: 'you must accept it on its own terms.' The trouble is that few readers share Mr. Gerhardi's recognition of genius; the narrators of the earlier novels and Dinah of *Of Mortal Love* sometimes ask to be forgiven rather more than seventy times seven for lapses of behaviour difficult to stomach by other characters insufficiently persuaded of the validity of the claimed exemption from customary law.

Mr. Baldridge claims no such special licence. For all his eccentricities, he is nearer the conception of the Common Man, misled and misunderstood, dodging to accidental triumph like a Charlie Chaplin personification of Mr. Gerhardi's general view that life is tragic but people are comic. This much granted, the comedy need only be mild; satire is unnecessary, malice out of the question:

> Having made Mr. Baldridge now stand up, now sit down, now kneel with her on the concrete floor of the balcony, according to whether they were singing a hymn or listening to a lesson or praying in Westminster Abbey, Aunt Minnie all at once declared her wish to leave the balcony and climb back through window. There was a plate with a plover's egg and some salt on it which she had been vainly offering to people and now said it was a waste to leave behind and suggested that Mr. Baldridge should bring the egg in. Mr. Baldridge did as he was told but, finding no table on which to set the plate, he entered the dining-room with it while the other guests in a stillness of awe were just tensely listening to the King taking the holy sacrament.
>
> Bess looked at Mr. Baldridge, shaking her head. 'You would!' she murmured. 'You would!' And Mr. Baldridge stood there holding the plate with the plover's egg under looks denoting the whole gamut of disapproval, running from mild derision to shock and suppressed indignation.

This scene is developed with the highest of spirits and becomes almost farcical as the unhappy man, missing the first round of various delicious foodstuffs, always attracts the malevolent eye of his hostess when, picking at his eventual scraps, he is judged to be devouring a second or third huge plateful. The comic sense here is best expressed in the host's 'confused dual look denoting compassion for the poor old boy who was too shy to ask for food but, given half the chance, would eat him out of the house'. Here, the claimed innocence and the open suspicion merge into that tolerant observation, missing nothing and judging nothing, which is basis of this author's theory and practice of comedy.

V

Thinking back over the novels (for I have omitted, in this survey, the biographical history *The Romanovs* and a few other titles), I can see, after all, some reasons why Mr. Gerhardi has not yet caught the wide popular vote. There is a lack of protein, as it were, and sometimes an irritating propensity to be diverted from the development of

his own undoubted gift. The reintroduction of characters and incidents and jokes, tolerable once one has acquired a taste for his work, may be a symptom of a certain failure of creative robustness which the ordinary reader is quick to detect, even in the lightest novel and even if he does not consciously define the missing quality.

On the other hand, I can see no reason why so many students of fiction, turning aside from the larger animals in search of more specialized game, have overlooked this enchanting disrespectful panda and discovered with joyous cries of comic sensibility the toad or the porcupine. For all his 'human' qualities, Mr. Gerhardi's is above all a 'literary' talent; his comic view of life is also a poetic view, and it is strange that more readers on the look-out for the 'extra something' have not found, with Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, the 'silvery vein of genius' running through the novels. My guess is that when many 'significant' symbols have become meaningless and much merry or glum hatred of life has been exposed as the shallow thing it really is, the poetic comedy of these novels will attract readers who want to be entertained but who also know, though they may not be too good at articulating their knowledge, that to laugh and be tender at the same time is one good way of coping with this world of flesh and time. Mr. Gerhardi omits much; too much. But as he says of Chehov, 'Progression means a succession of lost opportunities. And that is where Chehov grips us'. For what the comparison is worth, that is where Mr. Gerhardi grips us too.

Meanwhile, William Gerhardi, while not indifferent to the fate of his Collected Edition, presses on with the stubborn hope of Mr. Baldridge. He is tapping away with his 'little golden hammers', as he calls them, at a trilogy of novels and at a history of his own times under the characteristic title *God's Fifth Column.* The trilogy will have the general title *The Latitudians*—a gift to the language, not as yet in the dictionaries, which may perhaps be defined (according to my understanding of Mr. Gerhardi's telephoned intentions) as more highly developed men and women who live not in the future but in the exhilaration of the poetic present, and who are preyed upon by their time-harried 'longitudian' friends.

'THE COCKTAIL PARTY'

Some Links between the Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot

HERMANN PESCHMANN

T. S. ELIOT has pointed out [1] how the production of every original work of literary genius inevitably modifies the whole preceding structure of the literature in that language. And what is true of a literature as a whole is true on a smaller scale of the individual writer: each genuinely original step that he takes modifies, albeit almost im-

[1] In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent': *Selected Essays,* p. 15.

perceptibly, our estimate and understanding of the whole corpus of his work. Thus *The Cocktail Party*[2] (1950) enlarges our understanding of *Prufrock* and *The Portrait of a Lady,* of the Sweeney poems and of sections of *The Waste Land* as it revives some of the sparkle we have missed since those early poems; yet, while on another level it 'underlines for emphasis' the central doctrine of responsibility, atonement, and reconciliation that runs in ever increasing measure through *Ash Wednesday, Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion,* and *Four Quartets,* it modifies our perception and deepens our comprehension of those works themselves.

For *The Cocktail Party* is both an end and a beginning. It is the beginning of a loosening and a broadening of Eliot's conception of poetic drama, an increase of emotional light and shade, and the utilization of more ordinary types to reveal extraordinary—or at any rate little appreciated—universal truths; but it is much more an end than a beginning. Eliot has again followed a procedure that he has adopted in the past: he has re-presented in objective form a problem which he had already dealt with in a more personal, interior way. Eliot's early poetry was itself essentially dramatic, pointing to the drama proper: the *Sweeney Agonistes* fragments were the natural comcomitant of the verse from *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Prufrock* to *Gerontion* and *The Waste Land.* Because the problems of *The Waste Land* admit of no solution within that terrain, their objectification in *Sweeney Agonistes* was, perhaps, incapable of dramatic resolution and that play destined to remain fragmentary. This suggestion is no more than a tentative speculation, but it may be worth some thought. Thereafter, however, there is separation between poetry and drama. The personal agony and regeneration of *Ash Wednesday* is worked out in the objective correlative of Thomas à Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral.*

> I shall no longer act or suffer, to the sword's end,

is Becket's translation into action of the poem's plea:

> Teach us to care and not to care
> Teach us to sit still.

It underlined anew the essentially individual problem of salvation; for had he not in the interim declared in *The Rock:*

> There is no hope for those who march in step.

The *Four Quartets* are now rightly seen as a unified sequence. But it should not be forgotten that *Burnt Norton* long preceded the other parts; long preceded, too, the next play. *The Family Reunion* is linked with *Murder in the Cathedral* in that it extends the theme of personal salvation by suggesting the doctrine of vicarious atonement, one generation expiating the sins of the preceding one, for:

> We have suffered far more than a personal loss—
> We have lost our way in the dark.

With this conception of our inescapable responsibility is woven that of all Time being one—an everlasting Now. And this theme, that

[2] *The Cocktail Party* (Faber, 10s. 6d.)

reverbrates through *Four Quartets,* is the *leit motif* of the first of them, *Burnt Norton.* Time is seen *sub specie aeternitatis;* and at once a moral concept enters into the theory of time:

> O God, man, the things that are going to happen
> Have already happened,

and

> There are hours when there seems to be no past or future,
> Only a present moment of pointed light
> When you want to burn. . .

of the play receive the corollary in the poem:

> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.

And the fear this realization brings is shown in:

> I am afraid of all that has happened, and of all that is to come;
> Of the things to come that sit at the door as if they had been there always
> And the past is about to happen, and the future was long since settled,

in *The Family Reunion.*

The mind—the personal and ancestral mind—is full of strange echoes, echoes of things fulfilled and unfulfilled, their place now for ever fixed (*Murder in the Cathedral*) in an eternal action. But the mind can retain only a few of those memories and retain them only fragmentarily. And Eliot repeats in *Burnt Norton* the line from *Murder in the Cathedral,*

> . . . human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.

Here we perceive but the conflict of opposites—'Garlic and sapphires in the mud'; but in the timeless world all conflicts are resolved, 'reconciled among the stars'. To apprehend this resolution of conflict calls for absolute surrender of the mind and will, for

> The inner freedom from the practical desire,
> The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
> And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
> By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving.

In our temporal world, this 'place of disaffection', we see, by contrast, only

> In a dim light . . .
> Only a flicker
> Over the strained time-ridden faces
> Distracted from distraction by distraction
> Filled with fancies and empty of meaning.

For a clearer conception of reality we must descend by the Mystic Way

> Into the world of perpetual solitude . . .
> Internal darkness,

where salvation lies

> not in movement
> But abstention from movement;

where, in Dante's words beloved of Eliot, *La sua voluntade è nostra pace.* But in the play there is the suggestion that this purgation must be active: we are no longer to 'sit still':

> To rest in our own suffering
> Is evasion of suffering. We must learn to suffer more.

The poet is clear at last of *The Waste Land;* he has arrived

Somewhere on the other side of despair,

dazed and, at first, only half convinced:

You bring me news
Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor,
Sunlight and singing; when I had felt sure
That every corridor led only to another,
Or a blank wall,

but emerging at last into a new world of intense clarity of perception —a world independent of space and time and unfettered by external circumstances:

Look, I do not know why,
I feel happy for a moment, as if I had come home.
It is quite irrational, but now
I feel quite happy, as if happiness
Did not consist in getting what one wanted
Or in getting rid of what can't be got rid of
But in a different vision. This is like an end.

In his next poem, *East Coker*, identity of end and beginning is established. . . and we are in the mystical world of St. John of the Cross. And, from one point of view, each of the *Four Quartets* may be seen as successive steps along the Mystic Way.

Four Quartets deal with ultimates and it was hard to see where, in a poetry of what I may call interior analysis and synthesis, Eliot could go from there. What *The Cocktail Party* does is to tighten the threads that bind all Eliot's work into a demonstrable unity, and at the same time to lend especial emphasis to a dramatization of the doctrines of *Four Quartets*. Those doctrines are successively implicit in Eliot's work from *The Waste Land* onwards. The way of salvation lies first in recognition of the evil and barrenness in our lives (*The Waste Land*); then in active renunciation of it, followed by the ability to 'sit still' (*Ash Wednesday*) and to accept whatever sufferings and trials God may send (*Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion*) even the spiritual aridity of the Dark Night of the Soul (*East Coker*). But after the aridity and the darkness will come the healing waters (*The Dry Salvages*) and the soul be renewed to pursue the way in 'Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender', until (*Little Gidding*) in

A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
All shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one,

consumed in all-consuming Love. The archtypal pattern of such a scheme is clearly *The Divine Comedy*.

And this, under the sparkle and glitter of what is at times light comedy, is what Eliot is now trying to dramatize in *The Cocktail Party*. But it is a *way of salvation* only that he is pre-occupied with. Those bird-limed in their own hell are not here his concern—

I do not trouble myself with the common cheat,
Or with the insuperably, innocently dull,

—and so, though the values in *The Cocktail Party* are ultimate, Eliot is right, on all planes, to call it a comedy: there is no final tragedy either in the Christian or the Classical sense in it. He is concerned with those in the Purgatory of mental, emotional, and spiritual suffering, and with the problem of fulfilment of life's purpose in self-integration. It is not surprising that his Purgatory, like even Dante's, is more convincing than his Heaven; Celia on earth more credible than Celia beatified.

The Cocktail Party is a play on two levels. On the one it is excellent theatre entertainment: the dialogue is easy to speak and to listen to—and one recalls that when Dante assays to treat of similar problems it is his poetic lucidity of language that Eliot above all praises.[3] Eliot's exhortation to achieve (*Little Gidding*) a language of communication 'where every word is at home, taking its place to support the others', here receives dramatic application; and the play scintillates with the wit of his early poetry that only just occasionally peeps through in *The Family Reunion*. But this time the convention of an upper middle-class contemporary society is never violated by the intrusion of monitory voices and visions, or huddled-up choruses as in *The Family Reunion*. Only at the end of Act II do the Guardians engage in a 'Libation' that recalls the birthday-cake procession of the earlier work. This is so short as not seriously to break the play's normal tenour, and it has a certain obvious symbolic significance. Yet, on the stage, this is felt as an intrusion of the incongruous and would better have been omitted.

On a deeper level, however, for those who have ears to hear, there is the dramatization, and often even echoes of the language, of the *Four Quartets*. Edward and Lavinia are to reconcile themselves 'to the human condition'; to accept, in a spirit of self-knowledge and humility, the relationship they have voluntarily embraced. Their responsibility is ineluctable; they must overcome (*East Coker*)

> their fear of possession,
> Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.

Peter has to learn to lose both his mistress and—harder—the Celia whom his imagination had created in its own image.

And Celia? Hers is the hardest way. She has come to realize the absolute aloneness of the individual; 'I want to be cured', she cries,

> Of a craving for something I cannot find
> And the shame of never finding it.
> Can you cure me?

But all Sir Henry can affirm, in the play's tensest scene, is

> The condition is curable,
> But the form of treatment must be your own choice:

there are no short cuts to sanctity. But there is a stage beyond and other than that 'reconciliation to the human condition' that Edward and Lavinia have embraced:

[3] In 'Dante': *Selected Essays*, p. 239.

There *is* another way, if you have the courage.
The first I could describe in familiar terms
Because you have seen it, as we all have seen it,
Illustrated, more or less, in lives of those about us.
The second is unknown, and so requires faith—
The kind of faith that issues from despair.
The destination cannot be described;
You will know very little till you get there;
You will journey blind. But the way leads towards possession
Of what you have sought for in the wrong place.

The way will be hard. Already in *East Coker* we had been warned:

In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.

But the end is the ecstasy of *Little Gidding*, where the fire of purgation and the rose of love are one. For Celia this end was martyrdom on Kinkanja. 'That way', says Sir Henry, near the play's end,

. . . which she accepted, led to her death.
And if that is not a happy death, what death is happy?

Those still bound to 'the human condition' will not see this. To Edward and Lavinia her life was wasted, and each feels responsible for the waste. But to Sir Henry it was triumphant and, in any case, worked out beyond their intention or understanding. And the poet who dared introduce into *Little Gidding* the mystical words of Lady Julian of Norwich, 'Sin is Behovely. . .', knows there is a region of responsibility where human judgement is no longer valid; where justice must be blended (else who should escape eternal whipping?) in the mercy of God:

If we all were judged according to the consequences
Of all our words and deeds, beyond the intention
And beyond our limited understanding
Of ourselves and others, we should all be condemned.

On this note of ultimate human tolerance and ultimate trust in Divine compassion, striven after but not achieved in the earlier work, both *Four Quartets* and this play end.

Murder in the Cathedral will always have its special devotees; but the levels of interpretation, the historical and the allegorical, were too disparate to make it a good *play*—in spite of its magnificent choruses. *The Family Reunion* surveyed a wider region and plumbed greater depths without losing contact with its contemporary setting. In a word, there was a closer fusion of the two planes of interpretation. But for many it had its moments of obscurity—not perhaps in the reading but on the stage—and the artificial speechifying of the chorus broke the contemporary illusion. But *The Cocktail Party* avoids all these faults; anything outside its contemporary upper middle-class milieu is limited to reported action. About the action reported, and the means of conveyance, there may be differences of opinion, but alike in its stage technique, characterization, and dialogue on the one hand, and in the inescapable clarity of the ultimate issues it postulates on the other, this, to date, is T. S. Eliot's finest play.

WHEN THE TREE-SWALLOW CAME TO THE BUCKTHORN

AUGUST STRINDBERG

IF you stand at the harbour's edge where the steam-boats lie, and look out over the lake, you will see to the left a hill quite overgrown with young green woods, and lying behind it a great building in the shape of a spider. For in the centre is a rotunda, and from this run out eight blocks, exactly as the eight legs sprout from the body of the spider. The man whose lot it is to enter that building does not leave it at will, and some stay there all the days of their life. It is the prison.

In the time of Oscar I the hill was not green. It was, on the contrary, grey and cold, for nothing grew there—neither moss nor heartsease, which usually thrive on bare rocks. At that time there was only grey stone, and grey men who seemed turned to stone, who cut stone and split stone and carried stone. Among these stone-age men there was one who seemed more turned to stone than the others. He had been a youngster when in Oscar I's reign he was clapped into that prison for murdering a man.

He was a life-sentence prisoner, and on his grey clothes were stitched in black the letters L.S.

Winter and summer alike he was there on the hill, hammering stones. In winter he saw the harbour for the steam-boats deserted and empty: the semi-circle of quays, with their array of piles, gaped like a row of teeth, and he could see the wood-shed, the riding-school and the two giant lime-trees, bare now of leaves. Sometimes an ice-yacht came sailing past the island, sometimes a few boys skated by. Usually it was desolate and silent.

When summer came, it was gayer. Then the harbour was lined with dapper steamers, new-painted and bright with bunting. Then the lime-trees grew green under which he had sat as a child waiting for his father, who was an engineer on one of the smartest steamers.

He had not for many years now heard wind blowing in trees, for indeed nothing grew on his rock, but in his memory there lived, as the only thing for which his heart yearned, that murmur in the lime-trees on Riddarholmen.

And should there come a boat steaming past the island one summer's day, then he would hear the smack of waves and possibly a brass-band playing; he would see happy faces, which clouded over when they saw the men of grey stone upon the rock.

Then he fell to cursing heaven and earth, his misfortune and human cruelty. Year in and year out he had fallen a-cursing like this, and his fellows and he had cursed and baited each other day and night;

for whereas misfortune makes a brotherhood of those who suffer, crime only estranges them.

At first life had been unnecessarily cruel, and the warders had ill-treated the prisoners without reason and without mercy.

But one day there came a change. The food improved, the treatment of the prisoners grew more clement, and every man had his own room to sleep in. It was the king himself who had eased a little the prisoners' fetters, but because hopelessness had hardened the hearts of these unhappy men, they were incapable of feeling anything resembling gratitude, but went on with their cursing; and now they discovered that it was more sport to sleep in the same room, for then they could talk at night. And they complained of the food, of the clothes, of the supervision, precisely as they had done before.

One day there came a ringing in all the belfries of the city, in Riddarholmen most of all. King Oscar was dead, and the prisoners were given a holiday. Now that they could talk together, they talked of escape, of how they would do the watchman in, and they talked of the dead king too, and what they said was not to his advantage.

'He would have set us free if he had been just,' said a convict.

'Or put in all the people who have made mistakes but are still at large.'

'Then he would have had to do the Warden's work himself, for the whole country would have found its way in.'

That is the way with convicts. They look on everybody as a criminal, and on themselves merely as men who have had the bad luck to be caught.

To return; it was a scorching summer's day when our stone man wandered about on the beach and listened to the bells ringing for a dead king, for Oscar the Merciful. He pried under the stones on the beach for miller's thumbs and sticklebacks; but there were none there; nor was there any sign, further out in the water, of roach or small carp, and consequently there were no gulls or tern to be seen. Then he felt the curse hanging over the place, making even the fishes and birds reluctant to visit it. And once again he pondered upon his lot. He had lost his name, Christian name and surname alike, and was called Number 65—a name written in figures instead of letters. He was not on the register of voters, he paid no taxes; did not know how old he was. He was no longer a human being, no longer a living creature; but not dead either. He was nothing—just something stirring greyly on the rock and terribly scorched by the sun on clothes and close-cropped head, where once there had been curls fine-combed of a Saturday by a mother's tender hand. On this day of days he was not allowed to wear a cap, for that would make escape easier. And when the sun beat upon his skull he called to mind a story of the prophet Jonah, who was granted a gourd of the Lord, to sit in its shade.

'And what happened to him then!' he sneered; for he had no faith in goodness, not he!

At that instant he caught sight of a giant spray of birch-leaves which lay rocking in the surf on the shore. It was quite green, with a white stem, and had perhaps been dropped from a pleasure-steamer. He drew it ashore, and shook the water from it, and took it with him some distance to a cleft in the rock, where he propped it up between three stones. He sat himself down beneath his birch-tree and listened to the wind blowing softly in the leaves, which smelled most delicately of resin.

When he had been sitting some time in the cool, he fell asleep.

And he dreamed:

The whole rock was one green grove, with pleasant trees and fragrant flowers. Birds sang, bumble-bees and honey-bees murmured, and butterflies flitted hither and thither. But one tree, a tree which he did not recognize, stood all alone by itself; and it was more beautiful than the others, for it had a number of stems like a bush, and the branches made fine sweeps and curves like those in a piece of crochet-work. And under its sheeny leaves sat a little black-and-white bird something like a swallow, but not a swallow.

And in the dream he was able to interpret bird-talk, and because of this he heard and understood pretty well what the bird was singing. And it sang 'Down! down! down; down in the dirt! Up! up! Up! up on high; Down! down! down! dead in the dirt! Up! up! up! up you ascended!'

It was all about dirt and death and resurrection—so much he understood.

But the dream swept along. He was standing on the sheer rock, alone in the burning sun, smarting with hunger and thirst.

His companions had all ostracized him, and were threatening his life because he had not wanted to join them in a plot to set the prison on fire. They stood in a mob behind him and pursued him with stones out along the rock as far as he could go. And now he was checked by a wall.

Over this he could see no possibility of climbing: in his agony of mind he determined to dash his head against the wall and so perish.

He rushed down along the rock; and lo! at that very moment a gate opened, a green garden-gate . . . and . . . he awoke!

When he recalled where he was, and saw that the pleasant grove had shrunk down again into the birch-spray, he grew dissatisfied at heart and said to himself:

'If only it had been a lime-tree!'

And when he listened, he discovered that the birch sang such a harsh song; it sounded like the sifting of sand and fine gravel; whereas the lime could play the velvet-soft strains which ravish the heart.

The following day the birch was shrivelled and gave little shade.

The day after, the leaves were dry as paper and rattled together like chattering teeth. And finally there stood there in the crevice in the rock no more than a great besom, reminding him so vividly of his childhood.

Then he thought once more of the prophet's gourd and cursed as the sun beat upon his head.

* * *

A new king had ascended the throne, and there came a new drive in the government and direction of the country. There was to be a new channel for shipping in the town. For this purpose the prisoners were requisitioned and put on lighters for dredging.

It was the first time for many, many years that he had been allowed to leave his rock. And he travelled on water again and saw so much that was new in the town where he was born; saw, above all, railways and steam-engines. And it was down below the station they were to dredge.

They began to bring up all the filth that lay at the bottom of the harbour. There were drowned cats and old shoes, rotted grease from the candle-factory, colour-fibres from the Blue Hand Dye Works, tanning-bark from the tannery, and all the human dross that a century of washerwomen had rinsed out from the waterside wash-houses.

And there arose a stench of sulphur and ammoniac so intolerable that only a convict could endure it.

But when the lighter was loaded, the convicts began to wonder where all that filth was to be tipped. They had their answer when the helmsman set his course towards their own rock.

There all the mud was unloaded and thrown upon the rock, and very soon the whole atmosphere was poisoned with it. And they walked up to their knees in filth, and befouled their clothes, hands, faces.

'This is Hell!' said the convicts.

For two years they dredged and dumped the dredgings on their rock, until in the end it was obliterated.

Every year later in autumn the white winter snow fell, and with its sheet of white drew a cover over all that uncleanness.

And when the last spring came and the snow melted, the unpleasant smell had gone and the mud began to look like earth. That spring the dredging came to an end, and our man of stone was set to work in the forge, so that he never went out on to the rock any more. But once in autumn he sneaked out, and there he saw a wonderful thing.

There were plants growing on the dredgings. Ugly, fleshy plants they were, to be sure. The greater part was of the plant called bur marigold, which is like a nettle, but with brown flowers—and that is ugly, for flowers should be white and yellow and blue and red. There were real nettles too, with green flowers, and burdocks, sorrel, thistles and goosefoot—all the ugliest plants, the stinging, pricking, evil-smelling plants for which men have no liking; which go where there are rubbish-dumps and vacant house-sites and mud-heaps.

'We cleaned up the lake, and we got the filth,' said the convict, 'That's the thanks we get!'

Then there came a time when he was moved to a new rock, which

was to be a fortress, and there he worked once more in stone, nothing but stone, stone, stone!

He lost an eye there, and got a knock from time to time. And he was there so long that the new king died and had a successor. On Coronation day one convict was to be pardoned and released. Whoever had behaved himself best and withal come to see the error of his ways—he should be pardoned. And pardoned he was! But then the other convicts thought that they had been wronged, for in their circles the man who repents 'what cannot be helped' is considered a poor thing.

So the years slipped past again! Our man of stone was now well on in years and, being useless for heavier work, was moved back to his rock and set to sewing bags.

One day the priest came and stopped a moment beside the man of stone as he sat and sewed.

'Well,' said the priest, 'are you never going to get out of here?'

'How can I?' answered the man of stone.

'You certainly could, once you came to realize the wrong you had done.'

'Show me a man who does more than Right, and I will believe that I have done wrong! But you never will.'

'More than Right! That is Mercy! May you soon have the chance of realizing what that is!'

One day the man of stone was requisitioned for road-building out on the rock, which he had not seen for perhaps twenty years.

It was a summer day once more. It was warm, and the steamers went murmuring merrily past, as gay as butterflies.

When he went out on to the promontory, he saw—not a rock any longer, but a pleasant verdant grove, with leaves glinting in the wind like wavelets on the lake. There were tall silvery birches and shimmering aspens, and by the shore grew alders.

It was as it had been in his dream. And under the trees grass was swaying and flowers nodding, and bumble-bees were on the wing and butterflies flitting to and fro. And all kinds of birds were singing there, but he could not interpret their language, and knew by this that it was no dream.

The rock of cursing was turned to blessing, and he could not but think of the prophet and the gourd.

'Here are Grace and Mercy,' said someone within him, a voice or a conscience, or what you will.

And when a steamer passed, the faces were not suddenly overshadowed, but lightened up at the sight of that fair green place. Indeed, he seemed to see someone wave, as people wave when they pass a summer place in the country.

He went on along a little path under the sighing trees. There were no lime-trees, to be sure, but he fearfully stifled his wish for a lime-tree, lest the birches should shrivel to mere brushwood; he had learned that much.

And as he went on along that leafy path, he saw far far away a white wall with a green lattice-gate. And he heard something playing, not an organ, but something more joyful, more vivid in movement. Over the wall appeared the roof of a pretty villa, and a blue-and-yellow flag stirred in the wind.

And above the wall he saw a ball of gay colours rising and falling; there was a faint chime of small voices, and the clink of plates and glasses told him that a table was being laid.

He went up to the gate and looked. . . . The lilacs were in bloom, and underneath them a table was laying; here were children playing, music and singing.

'That is Heaven!' the voice said to him.

He stood a long time, gazing—so long that, being old, he collapsed from fatigue, and hunger and thirst, and all life's tribulations.

Then the gate opened, and a little girl dressed in light-coloured clothes came out. In her hand she carried a silver tray, and on it stood a glass of wine, the reddest he had ever seen. And the child came up to the old man, proffered it and said:

'Come, little old man, you shall have wine to drink.'

The old man took and drank. It was wine of prosperity, from the lands of the sun far away; and it tasted like the sweetness of blessed life when life is at its sweetest.

'This is Mercy!' said his own cracked old voice, 'But you, my dear, you wouldn't in your innocence have given me to drink, if you had known who I am. Do you know who I am?'

'Yes, of course; you are a convict,' answered the girl.

'You knew! And yet . . . This is Mercy!'

When the old man of stone turned away to go back, he was no longer made of stone, but something had begun to grow in him too. And as he rounded a steep face of rock he saw a tree of many stems, like a bush. It was more beautiful than any other tree, and was a buckthorn, although the old man did not know it. In the tree a little restless bird was flying, black and white like a swallow, and people call her the tree-swallow, although her name is something different. And she sat deep in among the leaves, and sang so sorrowful but sweet:—

'Down, down, down, dead in the dirt.
Up, up, up you ascended.'

Everything was as it had been in the dream; and then the old man understood what the tree-swallow meant.

Translated by R. J. Charleston

MODERN SWEDISH POETRY

Translated by CAROLYN HANNAY *and* J. M. NOSWORTHY

Lyric poetry is traditionally a dominant genre in Sweden. In contrast to their dramatic and epic-minded neighbours in Scandinavia, the Swedes are more susceptible to the moods which create this type of literature. A meditative, tender and sometimes powerful melancholy is considered to be part of the Swedish national character. An advanced nation in the fields of natural science, technics and social organization, Sweden is somewhat paradoxically also the home of brooding and sadness, enthusiasm and intense feeling. As a result, the romantic era in Swedish literature has been both lengthy and influential. It is noteworthy, too, that the foremost figure of the realist school, August Strindberg, had basically a strong lyrical temperament which in spite of all personal controversies connected him with the following epoch. His bold achievements were in the 1890's met by a renaissance of sensitivity and fantasy, which also brought forward a strong revival of the lyric. The productions of this period had a lasting influence on this century: the younger generation did not find it easy either to follow the masters nor carve their own way to independent expression.

After the first World War, gratifying signs of regeneration were seen. Through a number of talented and original artists, lyric poetry regained its place in literature, and now has won a growing and interested public. In present-day Sweden the lyric is in consequence not a curious hobby for 'highbrows', but a medium of wider acceptance with a scope and response outside the expert circle. The poets here represented have each played a part in this development. *Hjalmar Gullberg* (*b.* 1898) takes a respected place for his academic and cultivated work, in which quiet irony alternates with intimate seriousness and religious feeling. *Harry Martinson* (*b.* 1904) is self-taught, a seaman who has created his own poetic vocabulary out of his unique experience and sensibility. *Nils Ferlin* (*b.* 1898) has a more popular appeal as an informal bohemian causeur with an underlying melancholy. *Erik Blomberg* (*b.* 1894) is a contemplative intellectual whose poems reflect thoughtfulness and social awareness. *Johannes Edfelt* (*b.* 1904) has devoted himself to serious analysis of his own time, combined with sensitive meditation and acute perception. His wide orientation is shared by *Artur Lundkvist* (*b.* 1906) and *Karl Vennberg* (*b.* 1910) both of whom, from differing standpoints, have made notable achievements as interpreters of the conflicts of the modern world. In *Gunnar Ekelöf* (*b.* 1907) more surrealistic tendencies have found an outstanding representative while Anglo-Saxon patterns have influenced *Erik Lindegren* (*b.* 1910) in his formal experiments.

Attention here has only been given to those poets whose work follows. This choice has to a certain extent been determined by personal preference and the general possibility of translation. GUNNAR AHLSTRÖM

HJALMAR GULLBERG

MEN'S ENCOUNTER

If in a wood apart
horror shook your heart,
then a fleeting encounter
might dispel the start.

Putting a wanderer wise,
afterwards go your ways—
this was a chance encounter,
seen in the ancients' eyes.

To pass the time of day
lightened adversity.
—Every human encounter
ought to happen this way.

[C.H.]

ANNUNCIATION UNDER SEA

A king is born who does not know His doom,
Unnamed, for so ineffably He came,
Born in this night of mortal woman's womb.
A fish's form is symbol of His name.

Deeper than human eye can penetrate,
I sank in sea-blue diving-suit of dream
To tell those things the angels told of late
To you, His symbols of the ocean stream.

O Sharks, lurking and tearing, without pause,
Down by the lighthouse, bodies of the drowned,
Pluck the serrated trimmings from your jaws,
Silently cast them to the ocean ground!

O Swordfish, swear to forge anew your sword
Into a plough, to plough the furrowed tide!
Stingray, dispatch your spear to lie unscored
In the sea where every weapon's laid aside!

To you, red corals and brown wracks among,
I speak this news of joys that shall not pall:
That realm to which all lands and seas belong,
Whose king this night is born in lowly stall.

[J.M.N.]

HARRY MARTINSON

COTTON GRASS

The cotton-grasses, waving in the evening, pose a problem:
The marsh corrupts to dust and dies; the marsh yields sevenfold again.
Humbly, in the wind that swirls about me from the crowns of pines,
I bow my head, acknowledging
That mud which came to manhood in my soul.

MARCH EVENING

Spring out of winter evening, and thaw:
The boys have lit their lantern in the snow.
To one who passed by in the clattering train at night
This red memory shall survive an age's greyness,
Calling, calling from the skeletal woods in thaw.
That traveller never reached his journey's end,
Whose life was, in that lantern hour, consumed.

VAN GOGH'S SOUL

Imprison stems that bow towards the sun
In scarlet flushed with flame.
Insinuate your brush into the thicket,
Pin there in blue
The courage of your faith's perception.
Drop the convoluted green of hedges
To snare the grass's drifts of orange-ochre,
Before your paint escape into the woods and turn to yellow mushrooms.

You must herd together all the wild things of your palette,
The parrot, wolf and humble-bee, lambs, lions in their canvas cage.

Darkness falls unseeing, void of stars.
Night shall hover round the windows of the spirit.
No fire to sign its anguish on the misty surface.

Ice glints obliquely.
Breathe, mouth of man! Breather, hollow crater!
Open!
Open, O God!

[J.M.N.]

NILS FERLIN

NOT EVEN—

Not even the little grey bird
That sings among green leaves
Will be there in the life hereafter,
And for this my heart grieves.

Not even the little grey bird,
Nor the birch standing white and spare:—
Yet, this loveliest day of summer
I have longed to be there.

HORSES

How sad the eyes of horses;
Not blue, but always brown.
Who knows what thoughts they are thinking,
These common horses of the town?

If a sempstress throws open her window,
Giving them sugar to eat,
They will possibly nuzzle for favours
When they next pass down that street.

But they never laugh, and they never
Smiled once at Club-footed Fred,
My childhood's Club-footed Fred,
Whose cheeks, when we took his tenor
For bass, flushed exultantly red:

Who, through vetting the hoofs and teeth
Of the mighty Ardennes strain,
Won renown and substantial gain.
But a horse has no sense of humour—
Not even the slightest grain.

[J.M.N.]

ERIK BLOMBERG

THE CELLO

I

When the bombs have passed over,
and the cannonade,
it's as though they all were listening
in a city that's destroyed.

Those alive to tell the story,
those who yet can draw their breath,
grope their way from murky shelters,
hoping dawn will break on death.

In a new, unknown Gehenna
painfully they would reclaim
what the wreckage failed to smother,
what is still unscathed by flame—

salvaging the last poor smoke-grimed
safeguards that a life assembles.
And against his heart a lone man
bears his cello from the shambles.

II

Under the ground
with hidden things,
invisible,
the cello sings.

None can extinguish
the deathless singing,
for slave and prisoner
freely ringing.

Hear how it rises
boundless in might.
The heart's desire
knows no respite;

free of death's menace
it will retain,
miraculously,
the undaunted strain.

YOUR GRIEF

Your grief is but the shadow cast by grief—
that final grief, which shall encompass all.
Then leave your woe, when clouds rain down their tears,
and lift your hand to catch them ere they fall.
Carry this draught to a long-thirsty tree,
and you shall hear its ravaged core again
coursing with a tenuous and gay
music, where tears and laughter are the strain.
Carry this draught to a long-thirsty mouth,
and you shall hear the stiffened lips expel
a whisper like the brook that knew not drouth,
like disenfranchised song from a struck bell.

[C.H.]

JOHANNES EDFELT

SOLITUDE'S OCEAN

But the years pass, and solitude still waxes.
You stand one day beside its ocean wave.
No swimmer's challenge gleams from blue reflexes.
It was your cradle. It shall be your grave.

This is your lye, your rod. Your lips are bitter
with phosphorus, and salt metallic smart,
as the dark alchemy of unsweet water
invades the inner fastness of your heart.

And suddenly there is a great cessation:
the beasts are still—the cities where men trod.
And all your urge is sudden self-prostration,
like to the faithful, face to face with God.

[C.H.]

ARTUR LUNDKVIST

WOMEN SHEARING SHEEP

The wind is skirling, bitter across the heath,
And gnaws the blue and stunted grass.
Sheep bite the grass with little yellow teeth,
While the wind teases their matted wool.
Grey clouds of autumn lug their load across the heath,
And sand swirls in the sandpits and hisses in the wind.

Hither have come the shearers from the village,
With their great creaking shears.
A half-grown lad then drives the sheep into the fold
And ties their feet together.
And the women squat and shear
Behind the grey wall of the fold, under the cloudy sky.
Wool tufts quivering in the gale, the sheep bleating,
Red gashes sheared about their bodies.

The huntsman gallops past through autumn woods,
And roes, red-flashing, speed across the heath,
And wild geese, starting up, go whirring through the sombre sky.

And now the women pause to brew their coffee in the sandpit.
They lace the coffee with some eau-de-vie,
And, scuffling rough and tumble with the sheep,
Shear further gashes on their bodies.
The boy stands staring at the women's thighs
And weaves a fantasy of rape and fornication.

Now, newly-shorn and naked-white, the sheep
Shiver with cold—one does not know the other—
And miserably stray about the heath.

Now, in the dusk, the shearers all depart
To the village, with great woolsacks on their backs,
And, in their girdles stuck, the blood-flecked shears.

[J.M.N.]

KARL VENNBERG

MORE FUGITIVE OUR MOMENT

More fugitive our moment
than the snowflake's shadow on your mouth
more fugitive
our vertiginous path.

More fugitive
than the snowflake's shadow the moment
when the dark companion
turned from my side
and you took me by the hand to lead me
over the unsteady foot-bridge.

More fugitive our moment
than the snowflake's shadow
but everlasting
as the shout of sunrise.

GUNNAR EKELÖF

INVOCATION

Waves, O waves, O ye my sisters, whom is it ye mourn—
twilight's young deity, or the shepherd of affliction?
Where white flocks now are resting under branches blurred with dusk
he dreamed away his day clasping his staff of poppies.
Now cotton-grass seeds the deserted pathways,
and first-born lambs are calling in his sequestered glen
where the forsaken cabin watches over
the road that stretches under grievous clouds.

Say, waves my sisters, was it so far distant
since the pale gleam of wintry skies set fire to his soul,
and drove his spirit to the brink of timelessness?
By shores where space shakes out the fringes of her garment
and the winds weave a pattern into the moonlit spume,
there he dreamed his dream with night in his embrace,
and set his mind to wander forth toward no man's possession;
there he renounced his yearning as a lost indulgence,
standing it sentinel above the furthest clouds.
Now stars are growing in the forlorn pathways,
and fallen stars are lurking in the glen of fate,
where desolation's cabin crumbles with the passage
of time elapsing without cause and without goal.

Say, O ye bitter waves, mourn ye the man or the divine one?
Say, waves, O ye who wash away the dreamland prints of both.
Say, waves, wherein is hid all that was written
in life's own stream, and in the sands of time.

[C.H.]

ERIK LINDEGREN

DYING GLADIATOR

Who ran you through the body with his trident?
who flung his net across your shoulders
and drew it close—in blazing triumph
so that you galvanised
fell sprawling in the sand?

Not he whose legs you see
as two columns soaring above you.
Not that hand with the stabbing blade
that stretches the shadow
along the dusk-dim arena.
Not he, not graceless Cæsar's slave.

But who sees you then?
And do you hear me?

The spectators are blinded.
In part by darkness:
a whitened wave that batters
against the rock of Hades.
In part by ecstasy:
a final pale in the unco-ordinated blood
that shudders at itself in you.

Who vanquished you?
Who sees you?

You grope for answer
but time denies.
For one instant
your agony is for ever.

Thus is your life made yours.
Thus is your death made.

FROM 'THE MAN WITHOUT A WAY'

I saw him quiver in the pitiless light of consciousness
while algae dripped shells and green strands after his limbs

I saw him hold his breath for four black days and nights
waiting for the dawn to grant a question

I saw the evening pass with wonder in its gaze
that wonder which is worse than an acknowledgement

I saw him tormented by all that he had loved
and how his heart sank to fill the empty places

I saw him bending under the earth's untroubled hate
reduced to the cruel mystery of a metronome

I saw him clutch at the skirts of the past
and his divining-rod turn with a smile towards nullity

I saw his mouth stretched into a crucified x
a simple equation for torture of the third degree.

[C.H.]

SELECTED NOTICES

Sri Aurobindo. By G. H. Langley. (David Marlowe, 10s. 6d.)

Professor Langley's full-length study of Sri Aurobindo is the first to appear in England and will help to dispel some of the ignorance that exists in this country in regard to the work of this eminent Indian.[1] The difficulty is very considerable in selecting the fundamentals from so expansive and comprehensive a body of thought as Sri Aurobindo's without destroying the balance and proportion inherent in his work as a whole. Indian philosophical procedure is totally different from European, for it is far nearer in some ways to the processes of poetry than to those of ordinary intellection, however flexible. Therefore to understand Indian thought at all it is necessary to give it access to the heart as well as to think it.

Much of Western philosophy has tended to be dominated by intellect, uninformed by spirit, and will yield its secrets to the ratiocinative mind. It seldom demands what Indian philosophy always demands—and also poetry and music—an intuitive consent to the validity of supersensuous knowledge, which is a knowledge based on spiritual experience and therefore not accessible to the unaided intellect.

Confronted with these problems, Professor Langley makes his way through them with skill and care. His sympathy is never in question, and his opening assertion that Aurobindo is primarily a poet, and that 'he approaches speculative problems from the point of view of a poet', and that 'there is a radical difference between any such approach and that which dominates much contemporary Western thinking', makes it clear how aware he is of this fundamental and sometimes critical divergence. Aurobindo was brought up and educated in England, first at St. Paul's School, then, as the result of a Senior Classical Scholarship, at King's, Cambridge (where in one year he won all the prizes for Greek and Latin verse,) and Professor Langley points out that though Aurobindo is so much the product of the Indian people and draws so deeply on the spiritual intuitions of the Hindus, his special value and attraction for Western minds is his familiarity with their culture and methods of thought. But in fact Aurobindo 'reacted against currents of thought that appeared dominant in our Western outlook, and failed to find in the West any spiritual home'. Without specifically giving Aurobindo's education in this country any credit for it, Professor Langley is at pains to indicate how closely related in many ways to Christianity is his thought on the nature of knowledge and on the value of the individual. The degree to which true personality is evaluated in Aurobindo's philosophy is not usual (though it occurs) in Indian spiritual teaching; it is basic to Christianity, and we may perhaps assume without presumptuousness that the West breathed something of its secret into his ear.

Much of Aurobindo's thought is a criticism of the methods of pure intellectual activity—especially as it is exemplified in scientific procedure—and its impotence in solving the problems of our age, or indeed, of existence at all. Professor Langley clearly assembles Aurobindo's arguments on the limitations of analytic thought and the scientific criterion of truth. This method of thought 'is to measure off, limit, particularise, and thereby divide'. But while admitting the importance of strict logical reasoning in its own sphere, Aurobindo points out, and much contemporary opinion among the scientists supports his view, that the reality of physical existence does not consist in the abstract structural forms which science succeeds in representing, but in

[1] In Volume VI, Number 2, a composite 'selected notice' of three of Sri Aurobindo's books appeared. In subsequent issues of this quarterly, other notices of Aurobindo's more recent works will also be published.

the dynamic processes themselves, and the cosmic energy upon which they depend, which is continuously manifested in the objects we observe. . .' The mystery of things is the 'true truth' of things; the intellectual presentation is only truth in presentation, in abstract symbols. For reasons such as these he insists that this mode of rational procedure cannot bring knowledge of the world, and hence that it is not surprising it fails to bring knowledge of God'.

From this point Professor Langley goes on to develop Aurobindo's concept that it is only in exceeding intellect by widening the field of consciousness, of which mental awareness is only a tiny and ill-lit corner, that we can overcome the limitations of our vision and reach to a wider and more synthetic knowledge. In rising above Mind, through Overmind to the Supremental, we become the freemen of a range of consciousness to which Truth is native. Here we are at-one with God, the source of our being and of all things created and uncreated, existing and acting with him in an inalienable unity and bliss, and 'with an immediate and intuitive control of things; an operative insight now super-normal to us'. We possess, in the very deepest sense, universality, where before we had only a divided and assertive sense of our own separateness. Therefore it may be said that by the methods of pure intellectual activity relationship is broken down, because it is the habit of analytic thinking to separate and divide, while to spiritual knowledge relationship is maintained and integrated.

Professor Langley examines at some length the nature of this other order of knowledge—called by Aurobindo 'knowledge by identity'—and some of the difficulties it presents to the Western mind enslaved by its empirical standards of truth. He devotes a chapter to the discipline of Integral Yoga and the doctrine of works, and another to the Ascent to the Supremental, in which he points out that though Aurobindo insists 'on the individual's need for becoming fully conscious of his dependence on the transcedent source of creative power . . . at the same time he is deeply occupied with what for him is the vitally related problem of finding the way through his this-worldly difficulties and conflicts. For Aurobindo it is only as the transcendent Power operates through man that he can hope to contribute in bringing creative harmony into his discordant world'.

All the weapons of secular humanism cannot anchor man to that deeper principle of being 'to which unity and integrality are one'. Even as the 'moral individual', the 'sattwic man', he remains at the mercy of the ego-centric motives of human conduct, and is obliged to identify himself with the assertion of the group, the community or the nation in its expedient but usually morally indefensible behaviour in resisting or appeasing the pressure of other nations or groups, since he lacks that knowledge of the 'true truth' of existence which would sweep away all these barriers and reveal to him the real springs of action and conduct.

Professor Langley's anxiety to smooth out for the Western mind what he anticipates as particular difficulties in Aurobindo's thought, sometimes causes him to assume certain obtusenesses in the Westerner that are not there. For instance, he speaks as if the contemplative ideal were the sole and rather remote concern of the religious, instead of being the focus of most of the spiritual movements of the present that are not confined to traditional orthodoxy. And surely it is an error to think that the idea of transcendence presents so difficult a conception to the Western mind simply because certain contemporary thinkers have 'no sense' of it? Modern Protestant Transcendentalism has so exaggerated a sense of the transcendence of God that it gives sinful man no hope of ever crossing the gulf. It would be true to say that for as many minds in the West that have been impressed by the thought of philosophers like Bertrand Russell, as many and perhaps more have been influenced by thinkers like Kierkegaard, Berdyaev and the Neo-Thomists.

Professor Langley's admiration for Aurobindo is manifest, and his study gives, with such excellent clarity and perception, an easily intelligible introduction to a most complex system of thought, that it is surprising to find in

his Conclusion what appears to be an inexplicable breakdown in understanding. With great modesty Professor Langley admits that the source of his incomprehension 'may be due to the fact that I have not entered fully into the experience Aurobindo is unfolding'. But surely this is not the reason. Professor Langley's difficulty is that in the final state of supramental consciousness Aurobindo insists that the mind must surrender all its old familiar action, in order to be replaced by 'an intuitive consciousness'. The words in which Aurobindo describes this consciousness, Professor Langley thinks, 'seem to imply an insight that is absolute'. This he cannot reconcile with a tendency in Aurobindo to use the mind as 'an instrumentation of spirit', and a check on possible emotional or vital abberations. It is dangerous, he says, 'as we have learned in recent times, to assume that intuition can for man be inerrable, nor can it supply the sort of knowledge of our natural surroundings which it is the proper function of intellectual activity to determine. . . mastery over the material world was not possible until the methods of scientific procedure had been discovered'. As far as this last statement goes, scientific procedure has yet to demonstrate a mastery over the material world as complete as the Yogic dematerialisation of matter. Neither does it seem relevant to compare the daemonic intuition of Hitler, with all its Asuric domination, with what Aurobindo means by intuitive knowledge, for it is the character of the consciousness behind the working that is the determining factor. Intellect can be the instrument of spirit; it can also be the instrument of the devil. It is not capacities *per se* that are good or bad; they merely reflect what shines through them.

It seems to this reviewer that there are two senses in which Aurobindo regards mind as an instrumentation of spirit. In its simplest sense, Spirit has made mind its instrument hitherto because it was the high-water mark of consciousness in the material world. In its more complex sense, mind, to Aurobindo, can only be an instrumentation of spirit in the gnostic man because it has been utterly transformed in him. It is no longer the stumbling and fallible arbiter of action or thought, but fully subordinate to its own highest principle, an instrument of 'that immediate and intuitive knowledge of things', which has its centre above mind. Nowhere can Aurobindo be found supporting the idea that mind should be guide and critic excepting in the early stages of *sadhana*. If the being is truly one with the Divine Consciousness, and action and thought are a spontaneous expression of that Will, it follows that it must be beyond possibility of error or necessity of criticism. 'I cannot believe', says the author of *The Cloud*, 'that a soul continuing in this work night and day without discretion may err in any of these outward doings'. The trouble is—if we may be allowed to adapt Chesterton—that the higher ranges of consciousness have not been tried and found wanting, but that they have never been tried at all.

Professor Langley ends his study with a chapter on Aurobindo's poetry. Rich in quotations, it gives some idea not only of his skill in prosody and his mastery of English, but of the growth of his poetic and spiritual development from youth onwards. A critic recently observed of Byron that it is 'the rich musical completeness of the line' rather than 'the effectiveness of the precise image' which is important in his verse, and the same applies in many ways to Aurobindo. Certainly, like Byron, his poetry makes its effect 'as a whole'. It is difficult to judge it in the context of modern English poetry, simply because it has been untouched by the same revolutions. This may demand a certain reorientation in the reader, used to strange technical innovations and to approaching modern verse with the same anticipatory frustration that he looks at a crossword, for Aurobindo's poetry is direct in idiom even when it is concerned with concepts of grandeur, sensuous as well as spiritual, and its meaning is always translucently apparent.

The Marquis of Zetland writes a brief Foreword to Professor Langley's study, in which he adds some biographical details.

Poems from the Mountain-House. By Raymond Garlick. (Fortune Press, 5s.)
The Brightening Cloud. By Frances Bellerby. (Peter Davies, 7s. 6d.)

The keynote of Raymond Garlick's poems is a radiant simplicity. He is a genuine countryman: one who understands the rhythms of the seasons and the growing and living things of the earth, and who apprehends something of their purpose in the divine universal plan. For in the midst of much romantic egotism and self-absorbtion in contemporary verse it is refreshing to come upon these simple, objective lyrics enunciating, if the term be not too grandiloquent, a theocentric view of life.

For Mr. Garlick,

> Life is creation—wrenching loveliness
> from stolid, simple things, from slate and stones
> and peasant-talk; refleshing moon-bleached bones
> as soul, the world and the word coalesce.
>
> Life is the lover, loving all things first,
> which is God; and in Him every man . . .

The bursting of the storm, the growth of the crocus, the gradual emergence of the spring, the natural music of winds and woodlands, and 'all the dancing sounds these ears have heard,' ('De Profundis')—all contribute their meed of praise and prayer in his verse. Sometimes Mr. Garlick's piety gets the better of his poetry: 'Vesper' and 'Orison' belong more properly to the hymn book; 'Exposition' is too exclusively a poem for the Catholic, and 'Procession' (which personally this reviewer found moving) is partially so; but the quiet sadness of 'Mural' has a universality they lack:

> It must have been much as is pictured here;
> she in her old blue dress, with wimple white
> as a half-moon set in a summer night;
> he in his new red cloak. Both standing near.
>
> Trampled flowers nestle in the velvet moss,
> spreading pale petals to the evening air.
> And all the sorrow of the world is there
> as the shadows lengthen under the cross.

There is no great originality either of rhythm, subject matter or treatment about these poems, and one is frankly derivative. 'Praise to the all-good God for middle things' has throughout prohibited degrees of affinity with Hopkins's 'Glory be to God for dappled things'; and, since the book is dedicated to Walter de la Mare, Mr. Garlick might have noticed that De la Mare himself has encompassed the subject matter of 'The Familiar Things' in two lines,—and rather better:

> The lovely in life is the familiar,
> And only the lovelier for continuing strange.

But the freshness of this volume lies chiefly in the direct impact of its imagery; the clear delineation of the thing seen or heard. There is little or no symbolism about it: God, Our Lady, and the angels for this poet need no symbolic evocation. They are as much living, everyday realities as the woods and slate shales of his native hills. This is not great poetry; but for the most part it is genuine poetry, talented, sincere, and admirably direct. Its clarity is luminous and the radiance referred to is a spiritual radiance.

Mrs. Bellerby, on the other hand, works much more in symbols than in direct images. She too, in this 'Atomic Age' still lives close to the earth,

> Listening to the clear insistence
> Of Nuthatch; marvelling at the courage
> Of Spider swinging into space,
> And at the way Beetles manage
> In a tangled grassy place
> With such integrity and patience.

And she, too, deplores the self-centredness of our contemporaries:

By the myth of unique significance
Men have become so absorbed
That the wisdom of the caterpillar
Leaves them undisturbed,

and

. . . swift as light flows the Holy Ghost
Through the empty hands of men.

Above, it was said, that 'she, too, deplores self-centredness'; but that 'too' is not quite accurate. Raymond Garlick writes oblivious of it. In a word, Mrs. Bellerby's verse is more conscious of struggle; it shows, with all its apparent simplicity, a richer maturity of living, a deeper sense of life's still, sad music—a sadness that Mr. Garlick confines to objective evocations like the little 'Mural' just quoted; but in her it is seen as a quality pervading existence, to be accepted and understood. Not happiness is what she asks in her 'Prayer for the Children', but compassion; for

Then the self shall never be held
Fast in its own small home
But freely shall go and come
When ears listen, eyes behold.

She knows that must bring pain, for

. . . also compassion must cry with the trapped,
the innocent,
Through passionless night serene for the sheltered
deaf and blind:
'My Flesh is riven, Blood spilt, in sacrament
World without end, without end!';

but it is the price by which alone, as she sees it, in Keats's phrase we can school an intelligence and make of it a soul. And, in a sense, that is what these often highly elusive but fundamentally simple poems are chiefly 'about', whatever their ostensible subjects: soul-making. Some of them are retrospective, some of present experience, but many, like the later work of De la Mare, look forward beyond the gulf of death; and at times it seems to her hardly a gulf at all, but all part of a continuing existencce permeating all things. She feels the evidence of this even in the very fabric of her home, Plash Mill,

for it seems to a quiet hand
On this wall's breathing stone
May flow the greeting of another hand,
Three centuries unfleshed bone.

Occasionally, she will come down into the market-place and give us, incongruously, a piece of rhetoric like 'Unholy Communion':

Man's definite needs in this progressive age
Are central heat, electricity, and drainage;

but for the most part hers is a poetry of withdrawn, inner contemplation. Mr. Garlick's verse has the freshness and serene innocence of the morning; but when the morning dew has gone from it he will have to find other qualities to enrich it if it is to survive. In Mrs. Bellerby's work the heat of the day is over; her serenity is an achieved serenity after much struggle and pain, physical and spiritual.

'Here we are', said the old woman,
'Under the apple tree
'On this sweet May evening,
'Where we belong to be.'

But, in fact, where 'she belongs to be' in most of these poems is otherwhence; beyond the shadows:

> Night's hand closes on the day;
> But for that brightening cloud in the east one might forget
> The excellent beauty of the dead;

and with the quiet and sober optimism that lightens the spiritual burthen of so many of these poems, she waits, knowing,

> No succour, no caress,
> Ravages the memoried heart as that dear unrest
> Of hands held then in the open hand of death.

She waits for the brightening cloud to attain to the full its known and certain light.

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